E. Knight del.

M. V.r Gucht Sc.

THE Christian's Support UNDER ALL AFFLICTIONS:

Being the

DIVINE MEDITATIONS OF *John Gerhard*, D. D.

CONTEMPLATING

GOD's Love to Mankind,
The Benefits of CHRIST's Passion, &
The Advantages of a HOLY Life.

WITH

PRAYERS Suited to each MEDITATION.

Render'd into English *from the* Latin *Original.*

By THOMAS ROWELL, M. A.
Rector of *Great Cressingham, Norfolk.*

LONDON,
Printed for E. CURLL, at the *Peacock* without *Temple-Bar*; and E. SANGER, at the *Posthouse*, at the *Middle-Temple Gate*, *Fleetstreet*, 1709.

TO THE
Lady JEKYLL.

MADAM,

THE presumption of Addressing my self to your Ladyship in so Publick a manner, has nothing to excuse it, but the Innocence of my Intentions, to recommend a Book of Piety to the World, under the Protection and Advantage of so Bright a Pattern.

I am satisfied my design (however it may fare with the performance) will meet with a ready approbation, from one, who has so hearty a Zeal for Religion and the Honour of God, and I am no less secure that my Judg-

ment will be allow'd juſt, by all that know you, in the Choice I have made of ſo Exemplary a Character.

Favours receiv'd are the conſtant, (tho' many times pretended) reaſons, for Addreſſes of this Nature: And ſo long as Gratitude ſhall continue to be a Vertue, Acknowledgments will juſtly follow our Obligations; and theſe, as the effects of a grateful Mind, will anſwer (or at leaſt be the beſt excuſe) for the meanneſs of our Offerings: And 'tis in ſuch a hearty ſenſe of real favours, I have preſum'd thus publickly to acknowledge the Hands I have receiv'd them from.

Beſides, Madam, I muſt own, there were other Reaſons, which de-

determin'd me to the choice of your Protection. For where cou'd a PROTESTANT DIVINE hope for a more favourable Patronage, than in a Family, that has been ſo indefatigably Zealous in aſſerting the Cauſe and Intereſt of the *Proteſtant Religion*? Nor let it be any prejudice to the Piety of this Good Man I have brought among us, that he was a Member of a *Foreign Church*; and I am perſwaded 'twill be none, in the Opinion and Eſteem of one, who has been ſo rightly taught to extend the limits of the *Catholick Church*, and her Charity for every Member of it, beyond the Scanty Conceptions of thoſe, who are for confining it only to the narrow bounds of our own Iſland,

Iſland, and that but to one, tho' allow'd the beſt and pureſt part of it.

While therefore GERHARD comes in an *Engliſh* Garb, with no deſign to foment our unhappy differences, nor to perplex our Faith with ſubtle Speculations, but to help our Devotion, and enlarge our Charity; I may preſume upon the kind Reception he is like to meet with, and ſhall have no reaſon to fear any diſpleaſure for introducing ſo Pious a Stranger into your Ladyſhip's Cloſet. In confidence of which, I ſubſcribe

Your
Ladyſhip's moſt Obliged
Humble Servant,

THO. ROWELL.

THE PREFACE.

THE kind reception * Books of this Nature have lately met with, as it is an Argument, that the Looſneſs of Principles, and Corruption of Morals (too viſible in a licentious Age!) have not been able, wholly to extinguiſh all ſenſe of Religion; but that there are ſtill left among us ſome (notwithſtanding all the deſigns of Atheiſm, and the ſubtile Speculations of Infidelity to undermine our Faith) whoſe Piety is not to be diſcourag'd, nor their adherance to the Duties of a reveal'd Religion, to be ſhaken by the utmoſt attacks of Profane Wit, and Reaſonings of a perverſe Philoſophy; ſo does it make all good Men hope, that the more ſuch Pious Books, ſpread and are receiv'd, the ſooner ſhall we be brought off from a fond and inquiſitive humour after things that are merely ſpeculative, and return to the ſafe and eaſie Duties of a Practical Chriſtianity;

* *Devout Chriſtian's Companion*, *St.* Auſtin's *Meditations*, *The Chriſtian Pattern*, &c.

which

which may revive the decay'd ſtate of Religion among us.

This, as it was our Pious Author's deſign in publiſhing theſe his private Meditations, the Tranſlator deſires to be thought ſo far concern'd in, as he has contributed to make them more generally receiv'd, and given them a more agreeable dreſs, than that they lay under in an old and obſolute Tranſlation, wherein the Warmth and Paſſion of the Author's pious Thoughts, were in a great meaſure loſt. The Age 'twas done in (by reaſon of the little regard had to the Improvement of our Tongue) ſcarce indeed admitting of a tolerable Tranſlation out of a Language that had been once Univerſal, and roſe to ſuch a Purity, as to be at this day, the Standard by which all Modern Nations improve their own.

'Tis confeſs'd, we have plenty of theſe Books of Devotion, (and God be thanked for it) But he that ſhall conſider the general Infection Irreligion has of late ſpread among us, will not ſure complain, that our Remedies increaſe with our Diſeaſes, or that our Phyſicians are more careful for us in the times of a Univerſal ſickneſs.

And

And I doubt not but the pains of the *Reverend Dean of Canterbury*, who has ſo Eloquently taken this Method to apply to our Diſtempers the enforcements to a *Practical Chriſtianity*, has the Prayers of many now living for its ſucceſs, even as Immoral as our Age is: And 'tis to be ſtrongly hoped, that when that happy and regular Reformation, which our *Charity Schools* are making ſuch proſperous advances to, ſhall arrive to its wiſh'd for Perfection, His, and all the Pious Writings of thoſe engaged in the ſame Religious deſigns, ſhall in the ſucceeding Generation have Hands enough to peruſe, and Hearts to make uſe, of ſuch Helps and Improvememts to ſaving knowledge.

I deſire therefore the Pious Reader to admit theſe Meditations among the number of thoſe of the ſame Devotional way of Writing, and I am not over ſollicitous in what rank he puts them, ſince I am aſſur'd the only deſign of the Author was to do good, and that he had ſuch humble thoughts of them himſelf as to * declare he ſhou'd think it a ſufficient reward, if they did

* Gerhard's *Epiſt. Ded.*

but

but raiſe one ſingle Pious thought in his Readers breaſt, tho' it were but for one moment.

The Reader will expect to have ſome Account of the Author, eſpecially becauſe he is a Foreigner, and I muſt confeſs, I am ſorry, I am not able to give him one more to his, and my own ſatisfaction, and therefore muſt deſire him to be contented with ſuch a one, as my want of opportunity to inform my ſelf better, will permit me.

" JOHN GERHARD was Profeſſor " of Divinity in the Univerſity of *Jena* in " *Upper Saxony*, a Man of indefatigable " Pains and Learning, and of no leſs Emi- " nency. We need no other inſtance of this " than in the elaborate care he took in " the * *Supplement to Chemnitius's Evan- " gelical Harmony*, a work he declin'd with " the greateſt modeſty, tho' devolv'd upon " him by the aſſignment of Great Men, " and by Eight *Saxon* Divines at a ſolemn " Meeting held at *Jena*: Yet at laſt by the " perſuaſions of his intimate Friend *Bel-*

* *Albertinus.*

" *thaſar*

" *thaſar Menther*, he ſubmitted to the " Labour, and with what applauſe, he " acquitted himſelf, the Learned know. " This, tho' a work that took him up " a conſiderable time, yet was not all he " Publiſh'd, witneſs his *Commentaries* upon " the *Hebrews* and St. *Peter*. And as for " theſe MEDITATIONS, tho' the ſmalleſt " part of his Writings, yet they having been " Tranſlated into almoſt all the *European* " Languages, may teſtify how generally " the Piety of them has been receiv'd. " And what a loſs the Chair of *Jena* had " in the Death of this Profeſſor; the Fu " neral * Orations upon that occaſion, " not only there, but in ſeveral other " Univerſities, wou'd give us a full ſatiſ- " faction, if we had them before us, as " alſo more particular Paſſages of the Life " and Tranſactions of this Learned and " Good Man, than I am able to do with- " out them: Tho' the Reader perhaps has " better opportunity to furniſh himſelf.

* *Mich. Dilker. Laudat. Funeb.*

" The Gentleman who has done me " the Favour to Tranſlate ſome few Lines " of Poetry in theſe Meditations, has " a Character ſo well eſtabliſh'd in the " World, for every thing he does in this " way, that I thought it would have been " a very great diſadvantage to him, to have " mention'd his Name, leaſt I ſhould give " the World a Jealouſy he had perus'd or " approv'd the whole, who, by a peculiar " Inſtance of Candour and Good Nature, " was pleas'd readily to give the Words an " eaſie Turn, and has only the ſatisfaction, " to ſee his own Lines the brighteſt of the " whole Book.

CRESSINGHAM,
April the 6th, 1709.

J.

J. GERHARD's Divine Meditations, &c.

MEDITATION I.

Of the True Confeſſion of our Sins.

Pſalm XXXII. V. 5.

I acknowledge my Sin unto thee, and mine Iniquity have I not hid: I ſaid I will confeſs my Tranſgreſſions unto the Lord; and thou forgaveſt the Iniquity of my Sin.

O Holy God, thou juſt Judge, my Sins are ever before my Eyes, and preſent to my Thoughts: Every Day do I think of Judgment, becauſe every Day Death is hovering over my Head, and I muſt render an account of every Hour at the Day of Judgment. I examine into my Life, and behold 'tis altogether Vain and Wicked; many of my Actions are trifling and unprofitable, my Words yet more vain; but full of vanity are all my Thoughts. Nor is my Life only vanity, but

unholy and wicked: I can find nothing that is good in it; and if there be, 'tis not perfectly nor truly ſuch, becauſe 'tis tainted with Original Sin and the Corruption of my own Nature. Holy *Job* could ſay, *when I conſider I am afraid*; if ſo good a Man thus complain'd, How ought a wicked Man to fear? All our Righteouſneſſes are but as filthy Raggs, and if our Righteouſneſs is ſuch, what at length will our Wickedneſs be? *When ye have done all that has been Commanded you*, ſays our Saviour, *ſay that we are unprofitable Servants.* If we are unprofitable when we Obey him, ſure we ſhall become abominable in our Diſobedience: If I owe my ſelf and all my ability to do Good to Thee, O Holy God, when I do not commit Sin; how little will it be that I can offer for my Sin? That very Righteouſneſs of ours, which ſeems ſo to us, when compar'd with the Righteouſneſs of God, is downright Wickedneſs. A Picture will often appear a finiſh'd Piece to the Eye of the Beholder, and yet be very defective in the Opinion of the Artiſt: So our Actions may look fair in our eſteem, yet have little or no worth in 'em in the Diſcretion of our Great Judge. God Judgeth not as Man Judgeth. The Remembrance of many paſt Sins affright me; but they are more that eſcape my Memory. Who can tell how oft he offendeth?

Cleanſe

Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret Sins, O Lord. I dare not ſo much as lift up my Eyes to Heaven, becauſe I have offended him who ſitteth there; nor do I find any comfort on Earth, For what favour dare I hope for from Created Beings, when I have Tranſgreſs'd againſt the Lord of the whole Creation? My Adverſary the Devil puts in an Accuſation againſt me: Thou Righteous Judge, ſays he to God, do thou judge him; ſuffer him to be mine through his Sin, who would not be thine through Grace; he is thine by the nobleneſs of his Nature, he is mine by that complacency which he took in Sin; he is thine thro' thy Paſſion, he is mine thro' my Perſwaſion; he has been a Rebel to thee, but my Faithful Vaſſal; he was Cloathed by thee with the Robe of Immortality and Innocence, from me he has receiv'd the Garb of Unrighteouſneſs; he forſook thy Livery to accept mine. Give Sentence that he is mine, and that he muſt undergo the ſame Condemnation with my ſelf. All the Elements put in their Plea againſt me, The Heaven crys out, I have comforted thee with Light; The Air, I have given thee variety of Birds all at thy Command; the Water ſaith, I have ſupply'd thee with all ſorts of Fiſh for thy Suſtenance; the Earth ſaith, I have brought forth Bread and Wine for thy Nouriſhment; but all theſe haſt thou

abus'd to a contempt of our common Creator; therefore all our Bleſſings may juſtly be turn'd into thy own Puniſhment: The Fire calls out, let him be burnt in me; the Water, let him be plung'd in me; the Air, let my Tempeſts and Hurricanes diſperſe him; the Earth, let him be ſwallow'd up alive by me; the Fire again pleads, let my Flames devour him. The Holy Angels alſo are my Accuſers, thoſe Angels whom God had plac'd as a charge over me, and deſign'd my Companions in another Life; but I by my Sins, have deprived my ſelf of their good Offices towards me, and of all hopes of enjoying their company in a State of Happineſs. The very Voice of God, his Divine Law, lays a juſt Accuſation upon me; *either fulfil the Law or thou muſt Die*; but 'tis impoſſible for me to do it, and to Periſh for ever is Intollerable. God himſelf the moſt ſtrict Judge Accuſes me, who is moſt able to put his own Eternal Law in Execution: I cannot deceive him, for he is all Wiſdom; I cannot fly from him, for his Power Reigns in all Places: Whether therefore ſhall I flee? but to thee O Holy *Jeſus*, our only Saviour and Redeemer. Great are my Sins, but greater is the Satisfaction thou haſt made for them; great is my Wickedneſs, but greater is thy Righteouſneſs: I confeſs my Sins, do thou Pardon me; I wait, O do thou open unto

unto me ; I lay my Sins open before thee, O do thou cover them ; in me there is nothing but from which thou may'ſt take occaſion to Condemn me; in thee there is nothing but from which I may be Sav'd : I have commited many Sins for which I moſt juſtly deſerve Damnation, but thou haſt not loſt thoſe Bowels of Compaſſion by which thou canſt recover me. Methinks I hear a Voice ſpeaking to me out of the *Canticles*, *Hide thy ſelf in the Cliffs of the Rock* ; thou art that moſt Immoveable Rock, thy Wounds the Clefts ; in them will I hide my ſelf againſt the Accuſations of the whole World. My Sins cry aloud to Heaven, but thy Blood ſhed for thoſe Sins cry much ſtronger in my behalf ; my Sins are powerful to accuſe me in the preſence of God, but thy Paſſion is much more powerful in my defence ; my very wicked Life is enough to Damn me ; but thy moſt Holy one, is amore ble to Save me. I appeal from the Throne of thy Juſtice to the Throne of thy Mercy; nor do I deſire to come to Judgment, unleſs the Merit of thy Holineſs interpoſe between me and thy Juſtice.

The Prayer.

O Holy God who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, I do with confuſion of Face, and in the moſt humble and proſtrate manner, throw my ſelf at the Throne of thy Grace, to implore thy Pardon, and encline thy Pity. Thou haſt Commanded me to confeſs my Sins unto thee, not that thou canſt delight to ſee all the filthineſs of my Soul diſplay'd, but to bring me to a thorough ſenſe of my own vileneſs, and how great that Mercy of thine is, which can and will Pardon a truly Penitent after ſo great and ſo many Provocations: Yet when I would confeſs the ſecrets of my Soul, and the many Sins I have been guilty of againſt thy Divine Majeſty, the Number of them affrights me, and they crowd ſo faſt into my Thoughts, that I know not where to begin: Such has been my abuſe of thy Mercies, that of all thou haſt given me, I am unable to render thee an account of any one of them. The Talents I was entruſted with, I have ſquandred away; the health of my Body, the ſoundneſs of my Mind, the eaſe of my Life, and the liberty thou allowd'ſt me, are all become heightning Aggravations to my Sins commited under ſo great Mercies.

cies. I acknowledge, O Lord, that I am a moſt guilty Sinner, altogether unable to help my ſelf, and unworthy that thou ſhould'ſt help me: My own Conſcience Condemns me, and much more mighteſt thou Condemn me, who know'ſt more of me than I do of my ſelf, and art greater than my Conſcience.

But, O God, thou God of Mercy, forſake me not, nor leave me under the piercing thoughts of my ſad and ſinful Condition; but in the Multitude of thy Compaſſion, make good thy promiſe to a returning Sinner. I earneſtly beg thy Grace to a ſerious and unfeign'd Repentance; I lay my ſelf Naked before thee, deſtitute of any Merits of my own; O do thou apply thoſe of thy Dear Son to all the wants and neceſſities of my Soul; let me through Faith in his blood, be freely juſtified by thy Grace, and let not any of my Sins be charged upon me to my Condemnation; Let me by his Merits and Righteouſneſs be ſo deliver'd from the guilt of them, that I may ſerve thee in Righteouſneſs and Holineſs all the days of my Life; and grant, that as Chriſt died for me, while I lay under the Sentence of Death, I may no longer live unto my ſelf, but unto him who died for me and roſe again, even Jeſus Chriſt my Redeemer. *Amen.*

MEDITATION II.

An Exercise of Repentance, from the Passion of our Lord.

LAM. I. 12.

All ye that pass by behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

BEhold, O Soul, with the Eye of Faith, the grief of thy Suffering Saviour on the Cross, the Wounds he bears while he Hangs there, and the Agonies of his Death; that Head which strikes Terror into the Angels above is pierced with Crowded Thorns; that Face which is more lovely than any of the Sons of Men, is defil'd with the Spittle of the Wicked; those Eyes more Illustrious than the Sun, are overspread with the Shades of Death; those Ears that hear the Eternal praises of Angels, are deafn'd with wicked Taunts and Insults; that Mouth which is fill'd with Divine Eloquence, and Preaches to Angels, is made to Drink Gall and Vinegar; those Feet at which we pay the Profoundest Adoration, are pierced through with Nails; that Body which is the most sacred Abode and purest Habitation of the Godhead, is beat with Stripes and stabb'd through

through with a Spear; nor did any part of him eſcape their fury, but his Tongue, wherewith he might Pray for his Murtherers. He who Reigns in the higheſt Heavens with his Father, is on the Croſs, put to the higheſt ſorrow by Sinful Man. God Dies, God Suffers, God pours forth his own Blood; from the greatneſs of the price that was paid; think how great the Danger was thou waſt in, and from the coſtlineſs of the Cure, think how deſperate was thy Diſeaſe. Sure thoſe were great Wounds, which would not admit of being heal'd but by the Wounds of Living and Enlivening Fleſh! Great ſure was that Diſeaſe, which could no way be cur'd but by the Death of the Phyſician himſelf! conſider with thy ſelf, O Faithful Soul, to what a heighth the Anger of God burn't: His Eternal, Begotten, and only Beloved Son, after the fall of our firſt Parents became an Interceſſor for loſt Mankind; but as yet his Fury was not turn'd away from us, he interceeded for us, by whom he at firſt made the World; he it was that undertook the Cauſe of undone Man, and made himſelf the Advocate for our Salvation; yet neither then was his Fury turn'd from us; this Saviour Cloath'd himſelf in our Fleſh, that the Glory of his Divinity being united to that Fleſh, might attone for the Sins committed by us in it;

that the healing Power of an abſolutely perfect Righteouſneſs being communicated to our Humane Nature, might purge out the Infectious quality of Sin that was Inherent in it, and ſeaſon us by his Grace; but ſtill the Wrath of God was not averted from us. At length he takes our Sins upon him, and all that Sinners had deſerv'd; he is Born, Scourg'd, Wounded, Pierced through, Crucified, and laid in a Sepulchre; his Blood guſh'd out at every Pore like Dew over all his Body at his Paſſion; his moſt Holy Soul is above meaſure ſad, and became ſorrowful even unto Death: He is ſubject to moſt bitter Pains, and the Eternal Son of God, complains that he is forſaken of his Father; he ſweat ſuch large drops of Blood, and felt ſuch Agonies, as to want the ſupport of Angels, by whom alone the Angels themſelves are ſupported. The giver of Life himſelf Dies. *If this be done to the Dry Tree, what ſhall be done to the Green?* If it fares thus with the Holy and Righteous *Jeſus*, what ſhall become of Sinners? How will God puniſh our own wilfull Sins, who was ſo ſevere againſt thoſe of the World when found upon his Son? How will he bear for ever in his Servants, what he ſo highly puniſh'd in the Son of his own Boſom? What ſhall Reprobates undergo, if he whom he ſo dearly Lov'd ſuffer'd ſo much? If Chriſt

went

went not out of the World without bitter Scourgings who came into it without Sin, what Scorpions ſhall they be thought worthy of, who bring Sin into the World along with them, who live in, and die with it? The Servant is made glad, while for his fault the beloved Son is grievouſly afflicted; the Servant treaſures up the Wrath of God to himſelf, while the Son labours under ſo much to appeaſe his Father's Anger. O how infinite is the Wrath of God! O how inexpreſſible is his Fury! O how much beyond all our thoughts is the ſtrictneſs of his Juſtice! He who let looſe his Anger againſt his only and moſt Beloved Son, who was partaker of his own Divine Eſſence, not for any Sin of his own that was found upon him, but for deprecating his Wrath from Sinful Man; what will he do to the Obſtinate Sinner himſelf, who ſecurely perſiſts in his Sins and Offences? Let the Sinner both Fear and Tremble, and be caſt down in ſorrow at the thoughts of what he has moſt juſtly deſerved; When the Son of God is puniſh'd for no default of his own, let the Sinner fear, who forbears not to go on in Sin; while the Son of God feels ſuch Agonies for it, let the Creature fear who has Crucified the Creator; let the Sinner be afraid who has put the Lord of Life to Death; let the Wicked Man be afraid who has thus

afflicted

afflicted the Holy God; let us hear him my Beloved when he calls out aloud upon us; let us hear him when he ſheds his Tears for our ſakes; he thus calls upon us from the Croſs, Behold O Man what things I ſuffer upon thy account; 'tis upon thee I call, becauſe for thy ſake it is, I thus give my ſelf up to Death; behold the Puniſhment with which I am afflicted; behold the Nails with which I am torn; there is no grief like unto my grief; and notwithſtanding my outward pain is ſuch, yet have I a greater load of Grief upon my Spirits when I find thou art ſtill unthankful for all this. Have Mercy on us, have Mercy on us, thou only God of Mercy, and work a Converſion in our Stony Hearts.

The Prayer.

O Holy, but Afflicted Jeſu, how is my Soul divided between the two ſo different Paſſions of Joy and Grief, when I conſider thy Sufferings upon the Croſs for my ſake, and the Redemption of a loſt and undone World; my Eyes guſh forth with Rivers of Waters, when I think on thoſe Pains and Agonies it coſt thee, to pay the bitter price of my Redemption; and my Soul is overſpread with unſpeakable Comforts, when,

ſince

ſince there was no other way left to appeaſe thy Father's Wrath, I meditate upon that infinite Love of thine which prevail'd with thee ſo chearfully to undertake and finiſh ſo ſevere a Work. How am I tranſported at thy Amazing Love! that when I, and all the World had undone our ſelves, and were liable to Wrath and Eternal Miſery, when there was no Eye to pity us, no Hand to help us, thou redeem'ſt us in ſuch a way as no Creature had Wiſdom to contrive, Worthineſs to undertake, or Power to effect. And wherefore, O Bleſſed Jeſu, didſt thou do all this for my ſake! but to bring me to that Faith and Repentance, which thou haſt made the Conditions to be perform'd on my part, for all theſe thy Meritorious Sufferings. I will, I do repent me of thoſe Sins of mine which brought all this upon thee, and I will go and Sin no more. I cannot but be afraid, and will ever in that fear poſſeſs my Soul, That if thy Father was ſo ſevere to thee, the Son of his own Boſom, when my Sins were found upon thee, he will be much more ſevere to me if I abuſe thy Love, and go on in thoſe Sins for which he ſhed his moſt precious Blood. O God, do thou ſtrengthen theſe my Holy Reſolutions, give me thy Grace to keep them, accept the Merits of thy Son in my behalf, and graciouſly accept of this my Repentance. Let not ſo baſe Ingratitude

gratitude be ever laid to my charge, as that I ſhould be guilty of Crucifying the Lord of Glory afreſh, or account the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing: Here me, O Lord, for thy Mercy ſake, and let not thy Croſs fall heavy upon me, upon the account of my Sins, nor cruſh me to pieces; but through the Merits of it let me be exalted into thy Everlaſting Kingdom. *Amen.*

MEDITATION III.

Of the Advantages of a True and Serious Repentance.

Luke XXIV. 47.

And that Remiſſion of Sins, ſhould be Preach'd in his Name, among all Nations.

REpentance unto Salvation is the Foundation and Principle of a Holy Life: For where there is true Repentance, there is forgiveneſs of Sins; where forgiveneſs of Sins, there is the Grace of God; where the Grace of God, there is Chriſt; where Chriſt is, there is his Merit; where his Merit is, there is the ſatisfaction he has made for Sins; where his ſatisfaction is, there is our

our juſtification; where our juſtification is, there is joy and peace of Conſcience; where peace of Conſcience is, there is the Holy Ghoſt; and where the Holy Ghoſt is, there is the ever bleſſed Trinity; and where the Trinity, is there is Eternal Life; therefore is Eternal Life the reward of a true Repentance: But where true Repentance is wanting, there is neither forgiveneſs of Sins, nor the Grace and Favour of God, neither Chriſt nor his Merit, neither attonement for our Sins, nor the juſtification of our Perſons; neither the joys of a peaceful Conſcience, nor bleſſed Spirit of God within us; neither the Trinity, nor eternal Life: Why then do we defer our Repentance, why do we put it off till to Morrow? Neither is to morrow nor a true Repentance in our own Hands or Power, nor are we to give an account only when we come to appear in judgment for what we ſhall do to Morrow, but what to Day has brought forth while it is call'd to Day. That we ſhall live till to Morrow is not ſo certain, as that all Impenitent Sinners muſt one Day die. God has promis'd Pardon to the truly Penitent; but has not promis'd ſo much as to Morrow for 'em to Repent in. The ſatisfaction of Chriſt takes no effect, but with thoſe that are of a truly contrite Heart; they are our Sins that make the diſtance between God and us, ſays the Prophet *Eſaias*:

But

But by Repentance we are again Reſtor'd to his favour. Confeſs and Grieve for the Guilt and Burthen of thy Sins, ſo ſhalt thou find God Reconcil'd to thee in Chriſt. *I Blot out thy Tranſgreſſions*, ſays the Lord, therefore are our Sins Regiſtred in the Court above: *Turn away thy Face, O God, from my Sins*, was the Prophets Petition; therefore does God puniſh our Iniquities that are in his ſight. *Turn thy ſelf to us, O God*, was the Prayer of *Moſes*, therefore do our Sins make a ſeparation between God and us. *Our Sins have anſwer'd us*, was the complaint of *Iſaiah*; therefore do they witneſs againſt us before the Tribunal of the Divine Juſtice: *Cleanſe thou me from my Sins*, ſays Holy *David*; therefore is Sin our greateſt defilement in the ſight of God: And again he Prays, *Heal my Soul, O Lord, for I have ſinned againſt thee*; therefore is Sin the Souls Diſeaſe. *Whoſoever Sinneth againſt me, I will Blot him out of my Book*, ſaith the Lord; therefore for our Sins it is that we are ſtruck out of the Book of Life. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence* ſaith the Pſalmiſt; therefore for our Sins are we thrown off by God. *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me*; therefore is the Spirit expell'd by our Sins out of the Temple of our Hearts; as Bees forſake their Hives for Smoak, and Doves their Nauſeous Habitations. *Reſtore me the comfort of thy Salvation*; therefore are

our

our Sins the greateſt Anguiſh of our Minds, and waſte the very Spirits of our Hearts. *The Earth is infected with the Inhabitants thereof who tranſgreſs the Law*, cries *Iſaiah* the Prophet; therefore is Sin as it were a ſpreading and Infectious Poiſon. *Out of the Depths have I cried unto the Lord* ſays the Pſalmiſt; therefore are we ſunk even down to Hell by the weight of our Sins. *We were formerly Dead in Sin*, ſays the Apoſtle; therefore is Sin in a Spiritual ſence the very Death of our Souls. Through Mortal Sin Man loſes God, God who is the infinite and incomprehenſible Good it ſelf; to loſe God then, is to loſe this infinite and incomprehenſible Good. And as God is the greateſt Good we can deſire, ſo Sin is the greateſt Evil we can avoid. Puniſhments and Afflictions are not ſtrictly in themſelves to be call'd Evils, becauſe many are the advantages we may draw from 'em; nay, that they are good appears from hence, that they proceed from the Fountain of all Good, that is God, from whom nothing but what is good can flow. They were in Chriſt the chiefeſt Good, who could not partake of what was Evil: Beſides they lead us to that chiefeſt Good which is Eternal Happineſs. Through ſufferings Chriſt enter'd into his Glory, through tribulations do his followers paſs into an Eternity of Bliſs. Sin therefore for this

reaſon

reaſon is the greateſt Evil, becauſe it draws us away from our chiefeſt Happineſs: The nearer we approach to God, the farther we retreat from Sin; and on the contrary, our approaches toward Sin, ſet us at the greater diſtance from God. How Salutary then is a true Repentance, which reſcues us from Sin, and brings us back to God? Sin is in it ſelf as Heinous, as the Majeſty of him againſt whom we offend is Great; and ſo great is God, that neither the Heavens nor the Earth can contain him. And again, our Repentance receives its excellency from him to whom by our Repentance we return. The ſinners Conſcience with which he has defil'd, his Maker whom by his Tranſgreſſion he has offended, the Creatures which he has abus'd, and the Devil by whoſe ſuggeſtions he has been led away, all theſe are as ſo many witneſſes againſt him: O how healing is a true Repentance which frees us from ſuch accuſations! Let us then make haſt, to apply this Sovereign Medicine to all the Diſeaſes of our Souls! If at the point of Death thou ſhow'ſt ſome tokens of Repentance, thou doſt not then forſake thy Sins, but thy Sins firſt forſake thee: Scarce wilt thou find a true Penitent at his dying Hour, unleſs the ſingle inſtance of the Thief upon the Croſs. Fourteen years have *I* ſerv'd thee, ſays *Jacob* to *Laban*, 'tis time now to provide

provide for my own Houſe: And if for ſo long a ſpace thou haſt been a Slave to this World, and to the Pleaſures of Life, canſt thou think it hard now at length to have a regard to, and take care of thy precious Soul? Every Day is our Carnal Nature adding to the weight of our Sins; let therefore the Spirit by a true Repentance take every day from our Burthen. Chriſt died that Sin might die in us; And are we willing that ſhould Live and Reign in our Hearts, for the deſtruction of which the Son of God himſelf died? Chriſt enters not the Heart of Man through Grace, unleſs Repentance as a forerunner prepare the way before him. Chriſt pours not out the Oyl of his Mercy but into Veſſels of a truly Contrite Heart; our Lord firſt Mortifies us to Contrition, that he may enliven us afterwards by the comfort of his Bleſſed Spirit; he firſt brings our Souls into the nethermoſt Hell through a ſerious grief for our Sins, that he may bring them back again by the happy influence of his Grace. *Elijah* firſt heard a great and ſtrong Wind that rent the Mountains and brake in pieces the Rocks; and after the Wind an Earthquake; and after the Earthquake Fire; and after the Fire a ſtill ſmall Voice: Thus does Terror go before the Spirit of God's Divine Love, ſorrow for Sin uſhers in the Comforts of our

Pardon.

Pardon. God binds not up thy Wounds, till thou haſt laid 'em open and deplor'd the wretchedneſs of thy own Condition; God covers not thy Sins, till thou haſt firſt Confeſs'd them; and he Pardons not, till thou haſt firſt acknowledg'd 'em; he juſtifies not, till thou haſt paſt Sentence upon thy ſelf; he comforts not, till thou haſt renounc'd all confidence in thy ſelf. And may God work this true Repentance in us through his Spirit. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O Thou God of Mercy and Father of all Comforts, who deſireſt not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould Repent and be ſav'd, make me truly ſenſible of the neceſſity for, and the bleſſed advantages of a true Repentance; convince me throughly of that hazard I run by delaying it, and of the gracious Pardon I ſhall obtain by a ſincere Reformation of my Life: Never let me be cheated with the vain expectation of doing that in the end of my Life, upon which ſo great a concern depends, as the Salvation of my Soul; and as the longeſt Life of Man is ſcarce ſufficient for ſo great a work, tho' ſpent in one continued Act of Repentance; ſo let not the uncertainty of

my

my Life here, nor of the Power I have hereafter to perform this Duty as it ought, betray me into that greateſt of all ſurpriſes, to be taken out of the World, before I have made my Peace with thee, e're I go hence and be no more ſeen. O do thou enable me by thy Bleſſed Spirit, heartily to believe, and throughly to conſider, the urgent need I have of a Saviour, and of all thoſe things he has done and ſuffer'd, and is ſtill doing at thy Right Hand, in order to the cleanſing my Guilty and Polluted Nature, and reſtoring me to thy Grace and Favour, that I may be hereby fully convinc'd, how odious my Sins are in thy ſight, how baſe and vile they have render'd me, and at what a mighty diſtance they have ſet me from thee, and that being convinc'd of this, I may put on a Holy ſhame and confuſion, and abhor my ſelf in Duſt and Aſhes before thee. That at length from Repenting for my ſins here, I may be tranſlated to the Praiſing thee hereafter for all thy Mercies to my Soul through Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

MEDITATION IV.

On the Name of JESUS.

Luke II. 21.

His Name was call'd JESUS, which was ſo named of the Angel, before he was conceived in the Womb.

O Holy Jeſus, be thou a Saviour to me; for thy Holy Name's ſake have Mercy on me: My Life condemns me; but thy Name Jeſus ſhall ſave me. For the Glory of this thy Holy Name deal with me according to the Interpretation of it, and ſeeing thou art a true and mighty Saviour, thou doſt alſo look with an Eye of Mercy upon us, who are real and great Sinners. Take pity on me, O deareſt Jeſu, now in the Name of Pitty, and condemn me not in the Day of Judgment. If thou receiveſt me into the Boſom of thy Mercy, there will not be leſs room on my account: If thou affordeſt me but the Crumbs of thy Goodneſs, thou wilt not be the poorer for my ſake. Thou waſt Born for me, for me waſt thou Circumcis'd, and for me didſt thou become the Saviour of the World. How ſweet and delightful is this Name of thine? For what ſound is there in the Name of Jeſus, but that

of

of Saviour? What harm can happen to thoſe whom thou ſaveſt? What is there beyond Salvation that we can either hope for or deſire. Take me, O Lord Jeſu, into the Number of thy Children, that with them I may praiſe thy Holy and Saving Name. Tho' I have remov'd my Integrity from me, is it poſſible to extinguiſh thy Pity! Tho' I, poor Wretch, through my own Folly have been able to Ruin and Damn my own Soul, yet is thy Mercy, notwithſtanding, able to ſave me? Do not, O Lord, be ſo ſevere to mark what has been done Amiſs by me, ſo as to forget thy uſual Pity. Do not ſo nearly weigh my great Offences in the Ballance, as to let them outweigh the Merit of thy Blood. O do not ſo ſtrictly regard the Evil that is in me, as upon the Account of it to forget the Goodneſs that is in thy ſelf: Remember not thy Anger againſt me, who am guilty, but call to mind thy uſual Pity towards a Sinner in Diſtreſs. Thou who haſt given me Grace to be able to pant after thee, wilt not ſure withdraw thy ſelf from my eager deſire of thee? Thou who haſt ſhewn me my own unworthineſs, and the Juſtice of my own Damnation, wilt not ſure hide from me thy Merit, and the Promiſe thou haſt made of Eternal Life, to all that return to thee? I know I muſt be tried before the

heavenly

heavenly Tribunal; but 'tis my Comfort that the Name of Saviour was aſſign'd thee in the Court above; for 'twas brought down from thence by an Angel ſent from God. O moſt compaſſionate Jeſu, to whom wilt thou be a Saviour, if not to miſerable and undone Sinners, who earneſtly ſeek thy Favour and thy Salvation? They who truſt in their own Righteouſneſs, and in their own Holineſs, ſeek no further than themſelves for ſafety: But as for me, becauſe I can find nothing in my ſelf worthy of Eternal Life, I fly to thee as my only Saviour. Save me now I am condemn'd, have Mercy upon me a Sinner, juſtifie me from my unrighteouſs, take off the Sentence that is paſs'd againſt me. Thou, O Lord, art Truth, Holy and True is thy Name; let thy Name therefore be made good towards me, be thou my Jeſus, be thou my Saviour; Be thou my Saviour in this preſent Life, Be thou my Saviour at the laſt Hour, in the Day of Judgment, and in Eternal Life: And ſo thou wilt O Merciful Jeſu, for as thou thy ſelf art unchangeable in thy Eſſence, ſo art thou in thy Pity: Thy Name will not be chang'd, O Lord my Saviour, for the ſake of me alone poor miſerable Sinner. I diſpair not to have thee my Saviour, for thou doſt not reject the Sinner who comes unto thee laden with

his

his Sins: Thou who haſt given me a Will to come, will, upon my coming, give me a kind Reception, for thy Words are Truth and Life. The deſcent of Original Sin upon me, may condemn me; but ſtill thou art my Jeſus, my Saviour: My being born in Sin, and brought forth in Iniquity, may condemn me, yet thou art my Jeſus, my Saviour: The Corruption of my Nature may condemn me, yet art thou my Salvation: The Sins of my Youth may condemn me, yet is Jeſus my Saviour: The whole Courſe of my Life, being ſtain'd with moſt grievous Sins, may condemn me, yet remaineſt thou a ſure Saviour to me: Death, that is to be inflicted upon me for the Number of my Sins and Tranſgreſſions, may condemn me, yet art thou my Saviour: The Impartial Sentence of the Final Day may condemn me, yet art thou my Jeſus. I am ſinful, reprobate, and condemn'd: In thy Name there is Holineſs, Election, and Salvation; in thy Name was I Baptiz'd, in thy Name do I Believe, in thy Name will I Depart, in thy Name will I Riſe again, and in thy Name will I appear before thy Judgment-ſeat; all Treaſures are laid up and included in this Name of thine, which either increaſe or diminiſh, according to the Diffidence or truſt we repoſe in it, which Diffidence I make it my daily

Supplication to thee, O Bleſſed Jeſus, that thou wouldſt remove far from me, for the ſake of thy Holy Name, that I may not be ruin'd through any Fault or Infidelity of my own, whom by thy ſaving Name, and moſt precious Merits, thou deſireſt earneſtly ſhould be ſaved.

The Prayer.

O Jeſu! thou Lamb of God that takeſt away the Sins of the World, how is my Soul raviſh'd at the very ſound of thy Name! what charms are there in it, to drive away all the Melancholy of my thoughts? When the Conſideration of the Sins of a whole World is ready to ſink that World into deſpair, didſt not thou, O Saviour of Mankind, interpoſe between them and thy Father's Wrath? My Soul ſhall ever Laud and Bleſs thy Great and Glorious Name, and my Tongue be ever ſhewing forth thy Praiſes! To thee do I make my Supplications, thou that art the Chriſt, the true *Meſſias*, the promis'd Seed which was to bruiſe the Serpent's Head, long expected by the Fathers, foretold by the Prophets, repreſented by Types, which were all fulfill'd in thee, O thou deſire of all Nations: O let me ſhare in thy Salvation,

for

for I ſincerely love thee, and will conſcientiouſly obey thee, my Saviour. O Bleſſed Jeſus, let me feel the kind force of that ſweet Name in which I, and all Sinners, do read our Danger and Deliverance, our Guilt and our Salvation; ſave me, O Lord, for thy Mercies ſake, and let not thy paſſionate deſires of my Happineſs be fruſtrated by any Sins of mine; and when thou haſt made me ſuch as thou deſireſt I ſhou'd be, Come, O Lord Jeſu, come quickly and receive my Soul, which thou haſt purchas'd! *Amen.*

MEDITATION V.

An Exerciſe of Faith, from the Love of Chriſt, at the laſt Agonies of his Death.

Phil. III. 8.

And I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord; for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Chriſt.

SEE, O Lord Jeſu, how unjuſt I am to thy Paſſion, my Heart is troubled, and my Soul is exceeding ſad, becauſe I have no Works of my own, nor are there any Merits of mine at Hand to ſave me; yet, ſeeing thy Paſſion is my very Act and Deed, let thy Works be Meritorious for me. I am unjuſt to thy Paſſion; becauſe when that is Allſufficient, yet am I troubled in my Mind, to find out ſome good Works of my own to add to the Merit of it; and if upon the exacteſt ſcrutiny I ſhould find out any Righteouſneſs of my own, thy Righteouſneſs would do me no Good, or certainly I ſhould not ſo ardently deſire to have it imputed to me. If I expect to find

in my ſelf the Works of the Law, the Law it ſelf will condemn me; but I know that I am no longer under the Law, but under Grace. I have liv'd a diſſolute Life, I have ſinn'd, O Holy Father againſt Heaven, and am not worthy to be call'd thy Son, yet refuſe not to call me thy Servant. Deny me not, I beſeech thee, the Bleſſed Benefits of thy Paſſion: Let not thy Blood be barren and unfruitful, but bring forth Fruit to the freeing of my Soul. My Sins have always liv'd in my Fleſh, I beſeech thee now at length let 'em die with me: My Fleſh has hitherto had the Dominion over me, let now thy Spirit triumph in a Conqueſt over it. Let Worms and Rottenneſs deſtroy my outward Man, that my inward Man may be rais'd up in Glory. I have always hitherto been Obedient to the Suggeſtions of the Devil; O let him now at length be troden under my Feet, he is at hand to condemn me; but he has no part in me. The appearance of Death makes me afraid; but Death will put an End to my Sins, and be the Entrance upon a Holy Life. Now at laſt ſhall I be able perfectly to pleaſe thee, O my God; now at laſt ſhall I be eſtabliſh'd in Goodneſs and Vertue. The Devil affrights me with my Sins; but let him return the Accuſation, and plead for me who has taken upon him my Infirmities, and whom

the Lord hath ſmitten for my Tranſgreſſions. My Debt is truly great, nor ſhall I be able to diſcharge the leaſt part of it, but in the Riches and Bounty of him who has engaged for me, do I put my truſt; let him ſet me free who has been Surety for me; let him pay my Debt who ſo Mercifully takes it upon himſelf. I have ſinn'd, O Lord, and many and great are my Sins, too many and too great; yet will I not be guilty of that heinous Sin, as to charge thee with falſhood, who both by thy Words and Works, and by an Oath, do'ſt teſtifie, that there has been full ſatisfaction made for my Iniquities. I am not afraid of my Sins, becauſe thou art my Righteouſneſs; I am not afraid of my Ignorance, becauſe thou art my Wiſdom; I am not afraid of Death, becauſe thou art my Life; I am not afraid of my Errors, becauſe thou art my Truth; I am not afraid of Corruption in the Grave, becauſe thou art the Reſurrection; the Pains of Death make me not afraid, becauſe thou art my Joy; the ſtrictneſs of the Final Judgment makes me not afraid, becauſe thou art my Juſtification. Let the Dew of thy Grace and enlivening Comfort be inſtill'd into my Thirſty Soul; my Spirit is dried up, but in a ſhort time ſhall I rejoyce in thee; my Fleſh waſts and languiſhes, but ere long it ſhall ſhoot forth again; the Nature of my Body

Body is ſuch, that I muſt ſhortly undergo Corruption, but thou ſhalt deliver me from it, becauſe thou haſt already freed me from all Evil: 'Tis thou that haſt created me, How can the Work of thy Hands be corrupted? Thou haſt deliver'd me from all my Enemies, How then ſhall Death alone have Dominion over me? Thy Body and thy Blood, and all that thou haſt, even thy dear Self, thou haſt laid out for my Salvation, How can theſe things be with-holden by Death, which have been redeem'd with ſo great a Price? O Lord Jeſu, thou art my Righteouſneſs; my Sins ſhall not outweigh what thou haſt done for me: Thou art the Reſurrection and the Life; my Death ſhall not be more powerful than thou art: Thou art God; Satan ſhall not prevail over thee: Thou haſt given me an Earneſt of thy Spirit, in that do I Glory, in that do I Triumph, and moſt firmly believe; not doubting in the leaſt, but thou wilt grant me to enter into the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Thou art my wedding Garment, O Deareſt Spouſe, which when I was Baptiz'd I took upon me; thou ſhalt cover my Nakedneſs; nor will I go about to patch this Precious and Rich Garment, with any Righteouſneſs of my own, What is the Righteouſneſs of Man, but the Rag of a menſtruous Woman? How then ſhould I dare to mend the

Glorious Garment of thy Righteouſneſs in ſo loathſome a manner? In thy Garment will I appear before thy Tribunal, when thou ſhalt Judge the World with Juſtice and Equity. In thy Garment will I appear before thee in thy heavenly Kingdom; this Garment ſhall cover my Confuſion and Diſgrace, that no one ſhall remember it any more. When I ſhall appear all Glorious and Holy in thy Countenance, and this Fleſh of mine, this Mortal Body, ſhall be cloath'd with Immortal Glory, even a Glory that ſhall be everlaſting, and never die to all Eternity. Come Lord Jeſu, and let him who loves thee, ſay unto thee, Come quickly to thy Servant, O Lord! *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O Thou Saviour of the World, who didſt undergo the bittereſt Sufferings for my ſake, out of an unparalell'd Compaſſion to the ſad and deplorable Condition I was in, behold me proſtrate at the Foot of thy Croſs, look down upon me with an Eye of Mercy; here will I ſtick, till thou ſhalt bid me depart in Peace; nothing ſhall tear me hence, till I have found a ſure Sanctuary from the weight and burthen of my Sins; I am amaz'd at the greatneſs of them, and my Soul is fill'd with con-

continual Fears when I conſider them; nothing but thy Love, thy Merits, and the Infinite Satisfaction of thy Blood, can give my uneaſy Spirits any reſpite from the perplexing Thoughts of my own Guilt. In theſe therefore do I truſt, nor will I be afraid of all the Powers of darkneſs, or the utmoſt the Malice of Man can do againſt me. Cloath'd with thy Righteouſneſs, and under the Protection of thy Croſs, I will triumph over my Enemies, and ſing unto thee an Eternal Song of Praiſe, for the wonderful Deliverance thou haſt wrought for me; who art the very Lamb of God that haſt taken away the Sins of the World, even Thou, O Bleſſed Jeſu, my only Saviour, my moſt dear Redeemer! *Amen.*

MEDITATION VI.

The Conſolation of a True Penitent, drawn from the Paſſion of Chriſt.

Taken chiefly out of St. *Anſelm.*

Gal. VI. 14.

God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.

ALL the Honour of the Saints, is deriv'd from the Ignominy our Lord bore at his Paſſion; all their Comfort, is in the Wounds of our Dying Saviour; our Life, is in his Death; our Glory, in his Exaltation. How great is thy Pity, O heavenly Father! O Lord God Almighty! I have been able through my own Folly to offend thee, but I have not been able through any thing that is in me to pacifie thy Wrath; thou therefore doſt, in Chriſt reconcile me to thy ſelf. Behold therefore, O Holy God, the Sacrament of thy own Fleſh, and forgive me the Guilt of mine: Have a Merciful regard to what thy dear Son has ſuffer'd for me, and forget what thy wicked Servant has done againſt thee: My Carnal Nature has provok'd thee to Anger,

Anger, let the Fleſh of Chriſt, I beſeech thee, encline thee to Pity; Great is what my Iniquity doth deſerve, but far greater is what the Holineſs of my Redeemer has by his Merit purchas'd for me; Great is my Unrighteouſneſs, but greater is the the Righteouſneſs of my Saviour: For, as far as God is above Man, ſo far is my Wickedneſs inferior to his Goodneſs, as in the Quality of 'em both, ſo likewiſe in the Extenſiveneſs.

Whatever I am, I am wholly thine by Condition, grant that I may be wholly thine by Love; thou giv'ſt me grace to ask, grant that I may ſo ask as to receive; thou giv'ſt me grace to ſeek, grant that I may find; thou teacheſt me to knock, open therefore unto me. From thee I have all my holy Deſires, from thee let me have the Bleſſing of Prevailing; from thee it proceeds that I have a Will to ſerve thee, from thee let me have Strength to perform it. O Holy God, thou Juſt Judge, if I hide my Sins they are incurable, if I expoſe 'em they are abominable; they ſting me with Grief, but they terrifie me more with Fear; with-hold not, I pray thee, thy ſo truly Bounteous Mercy, where thou find'ſt ſo much real Miſery; thou find'ſt in me Sin that is great, let thy Grace ſtill be greater and more abound. O Bleſſed Father, pour not out thy

thy Wrath upon me, when for my Sin's ſake thou haſt ſmitten thine own Son. O Holy Jeſu, do thou reſcue me from the Divine Wrath, who for me didſt bear the weight of it on thy Croſs. O Holy Ghoſt, protect me with thy inward Conſolations, againſt the Anger of God, who, in the Goſpel, has declar'd Mercy to all that are truly Pentient, and of a contrite Heart. O God of Holineſs, and Juſt Judge, I can find no Place where to hide my ſelf from thy preſence, when thou art angry: *If I Climb up into Heaven, thou art there; if I go down to Hell, behold thou art there: If I ſhall take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the furthermoſt part of the Sea, even there thy Hand ſhall lead me, and thy Right-hand ſhall hold me up.* To Chriſt therefore will I flee, and in his Wounds will I hide my ſelf. O Merciful God, look down upon the Body of thy Son, all over bleeding with Wounds, and do not behold thoſe Wounds my Sins have made in my Soul; let the Blood of thy Son waſh me from all the Stains and Defilements of Sin; hear thoſe moſt ardent Prayers of his which he offers up to thee for the Salvation of his Elect. O God of Holineſs, thou Juſt Judge, my Life ſtrikes terror into my Soul; for when I diligently examine into it, it appears all over Sin or Barrenneſs; and if there ſeems to be any Fruit of Goodneſs in it, 'tis ſo diſ-

diſſembled and imperfect, or, by ſome means or other, ſo corrupt, that it may either not pleaſe, or even diſpleaſe thy Eyes.

My Life is truly all over immers'd in Sin, and deſerves Damnation, or is unfruitful, and truly deſpicable. But why do I make a diſtinction between a Life that is unfruitful, and a Life that deſerves Damnation? they are both the ſame; for *every Tree that brings not forth good Fruit, ſhall be caſt into the Fire:* Not only the Tree that brings forth evil Fruit, but the Tree that brings forth no Fruit at all, are equally to be Burnt. I am afraid, when I conſider the Goats plac'd on the Left-hand of the Judge, not becauſe they had done Evil, but becauſe they had done no Good; they had diſtributed no Bread to the Hungry, nor given Drink to the Thirſty. O therefore thou dry and uſeleſs Wood, that deſerv'ſt to be burnt for ever! What wilt thou anſwer for thy ſelf in that Day, when every, the moſt minute Paſſage of thy Life, that has been truſted to thee, ſhall be requir'd from thee how it has been ſpent? A Hair of thy Head ſhall not fall, nor a Moment of thy Time paſs away, but thou muſt account for. O the ſtraits I ſhall be in at that Day! On the one ſide of me will be my crying Sins, on the other, amazing Juſtice; under me, the deep Abyſs of Hell gaping for me, above me,

me, my Angry Judge; within me, a gnawing Conſcience, and all around me, a Crackling fiery World. The Juſt ſhall ſcarcely be ſav'd, Whether then ſhall the Sinner, thus ſurpriz'd in his Sins, turn himſelf? To hide himſelf will be impoſſible, and to appear will be a Thought intollerable, Where then ſhall my Soul find Salvation? Whence ſhall ſhe ſeek for Council? Who is he that is call'd the Councellor ſent by God? 'Tis Jeſus himſelf, he who is likewiſe my Judge, to fall into whoſe Hands I tremble. Breath a while, O my Soul, do not be caſt down with Deſpair; truſt in him whom thou feareſt; fly unto him for ſafety, from whom thou haſt hitherto fled by thy Sins. O Jeſu Chriſt, for this thy Name ſake, do unto me according to thy Name; look favourably upon me, when in my diſtreſs I call upon thee. If thou ſhalt admit me into the ſpacious Boſom of thy Mercy, there will not be the leſs room in it on my account. 'Tis true, O Lord, my guilty Conſcience tells me I have deſerv'd Damnation, and my Repentance is not ſufficient to make ſatisfaction; but yet, 'tis certain, thy Mercy exceeds all my Offences. In thee, O Lord, do I truſt, let me not be confounded for ever. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O Moſt Merciful and Compaſſionate Jeſu, all the Faculties of my Soul are not large enough to comprehend that infinite Love of thine, which thou haſt ſhewn to Sinners; yet do thou fill me with ſuch a grateful ſenſe of thy Sufferings, that there may be no room left in my Heart, for the Cares and Concerns of this World, ever to drive it out. O may I always love thee, and never more offend and grieve thee, who haſt already been ſo highly offended and griev'd, not only for mine, but for the Sins of a whole World. I am Redeem'd, 'twas thou who paidſt down the Ranſom of my Redemption; O let me not by freſh Provocations enflame my Debts, and contract a new Guilt upon my Soul, for I have no other Saviour to die for me again, nor will any other Satisfaction be accepted, but what thou haſt already made to thy Father. Even ſo, O Bleſſed Jeſu, becauſe thou hadſt a Love for me, let mine for thee be as great as ever fill'd the Soul of a Redeem'd Penitent. *Amen*, Lord Jeſus, *Amen*.

MEDITATION VII.

Of the Benefits of our Saviour's Paſſion.

Pſalm XXXIX. 8.

And now, Lord, what is my hope? truly my hope is even in thee.

AS often as I meditate on the Paſſion of my Saviour, I preſume to promiſe my ſelf all that is Great, from the Love of God, and the Pardon of my Sins. He bows his Head upon the Croſs to kiſs me; he ſtretches forth his Arms to embrace me; he opens his Hands to beſtow Bleſſings on me; he opens his Side to give me a ſight of that ardent Love which is in his very Heart. He is exalted from the Earth, that he may draw all Mankind unto himſelf: His Wounds look Pale and Wan through Pain, but they are made lively and freſh through his Life; therefore through the Orifice of his Wound, muſt we enter into the Secret of his Heart. With him there is altogether plenteous Redemption; becauſe not only a ſingle Drop, but a Stream of Blood, flow'd from his Hands, Feet, and Side, as a Grape thrown into the Wine-preſs is broken by the weight, and plentifully emits its Juice; ſo the Body of Chriſt, preſs'd under the weight

weight of Divine Wrath, and the Sins of a whole World, pours out his moſt Precious Blood abundantly. When *Abraham* would have offer'd up his Son in Sacrifice, *Now know I*, ſaid God, *for a certain, that thou loveſt me.* Do thou alſo acknowledge the Immenſe Love of the Eternal Father, who would deliver up his only begotten Son for us. He loved us, when as yet we were his Enemies; And will he, think you, forget us, when by the Death of his Son we are reconcil'd to him? Can the Blood of him that was of ſo great a Price, forbear to be had in Remembrance by him, when the Tears and Actions of the Righteous are all Regiſtred before him? Can Chriſt, who now lives at the Right hand of God above, forget them for whom he ſo willingly offer'd up himſelf to Death? Can he forget them, now he is exalted in his Glory, for whom he bore ſuch ſevere Torments? Think, O Faithful Soul, on the many Benefits of thy Saviour's Paſſion: Chriſt, for our ſake, ſweat great Drops of Blood, that we, at our laſt Agonies of Death, might not ſink under its cold Embraces: He was willing to ſtruggle with Death at his laſt Hour, that we might not at that time be dejected in Spirit: He was willing even unto Death, to bear moſt grievous ſorrow and trouble of Mind, that we might be made Partakers of

Eternal

Eternal Joy in his Kingdom. He was willing to be betray'd by a Kiſs, under the pretence of Friendſhip and Kindneſs, that he might aboliſh Sin, by which the great Tempter, under a ſhow of favour had betray'd our firſt Parents: He was willing to be taken and bound by the *Jews*, that he might ſet us free from thoſe Chains of Sin, with which we were holden, and condemn'd to eternal Ruin: He was willing to begin his Paſſion in the Garden, to attone for that Sin, which took its Riſe in the Garden of Paradiſe. He ſubmitted to be comforted by an Angel, that he might make us ſit down with Angels in his heavenly Manſion: He is forſaken by his Diſciples, that he might again unite us to God, from whom by a baſe Revolt we were fall'n: He was accus'd by falſe Witneſs before the Council, that our grand Adverſary, the Devil, might not accuſe us by the Law of God: He was condemn'd on Earth, that we might be acquitted in Heaven: He who did no Sin, open'd not his Mouth, when he was charg'd with Sin, that we might not be ſtruck dumb for our Sins, when they ſhould be brought before the Judgment of God: He was willing to be Buffeted, that he might free us from the Laſhes of the Devil and our own Conſcience: He ſuffer'd himſelf to be inſulted, that we might eſcape the Inſults

of

of the Devil: His Face was cover'd, that he might remove from us the Vail of Sin, which intercepts our ſight of God, and draws over our Souls a dangerous Cloud of Ignorance: He was willing to be ſtrip'd of his Garment, that he might reſtore to us the Garment of Innocence, which by our diſobedience we had loſt: He was prick'd with Throns, that he might heal the inward Corruptions of our Hearts: He bore the weight of his own Croſs, that he might deliver us from the weight of eternal Puniſhment: He cries out that he was forſaken of God, that he might procure us an everlaſting Habitation with him: He thirſted on the Croſs, that he might deſerve for us the Influences of Divine Grace, and that we might not periſh with eternal Thirſt: He was willing to be ſcorch'd with the Burnings of God's Wrath, that he might take away from us the unquenchable Fire of Hell Torments: He was judg'd before Men, that he might free us from that Judgment God would otherwiſe paſs upon us: He was found guilty, that we who were guilty might be found Innocent: He was ſlain by wicked Hands, that the Hands of the Devil might not ſeize us: He cried out through pain, that he might ſave us from eternal weeping and Howlings: He wept, that he might wipe away all Tears from our Eyes:

He

He died, that we might live: He felt unſpeakable Pains, that we might never feel 'em: He was humbled, that he might effectually cure our Pride: He was crown'd with Thorns, that he might merit for us a heavenly Diadem: He ſuffer'd by all Mankind, that through him, all Mankind might be ſaved: His Eyes were overſpread with the darkneſs of Death, that we might live in the light of eternal Glory: He heard the moſt bitter Scoffs and Taunts, while he was on Earth, that we might hear the Hallelujahs and Praiſes of the Angels above.

Don't then diſpair, O Faithful Soul: The Infinite Goodneſs of God by thy Sin is offended, but there has been a Price of Infinite Value paid down for thee: Thou art to be judg'd for all thy Sins, but the Son of God has been judg'd already, for the Sins of the whole World, which he had Mercifully taken upon himſelf: Thy Sins are to be puniſh'd, but God has already puniſh'd 'em in his Son: The Wounds thy Sins have made in thy Soul are truly great, but precious is the balmy and healing Vertue of the Blood of Chriſt: The Law of *Moſes* pronounces thee accurs'd, becauſe thou haſt not kept all things that are written in the Law, but Chriſt has became a Curſe for thee: There is a Hand writing regiſtred in the

the Court above againſt thee, but that is blotted out by the Blood of Chriſt. Thy Paſſion therefore, O Holy Jeſus, is my laſt Refuge.

The Prayer.

UNTO thee, O Crucified Jeſus, will I look up, while thou art hanging upon the Croſs, and fetch down from thee the only Comforts I deſire to be applied to my ſinful Soul. Thy Sufferings are full of the higheſt Grief and Sorrow, and extorted from thee the ſevereſt Complaint that ever was made in Human Nature. I cannot but grieve, and my Soul has a painful ſenſe of thy bitter Sufferings; but when I conſider, that thou foreſaw'ſt all theſe thy Sorrows, and yet out of Love, Infinite Love to my Soul, woud'ſt not draw back from this amazing Conflict! How can I not rejoice, to think that all was finiſh'd that was neceſſary for my Redemption. Thanks, Eternal Thanks and Praiſe be to my Redeemer, who has made his Triumphant Entry into his own and his Father's Kingdom, even Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

MEDITATION VIII.

Of the Certainty of the Salvation which Chriſt has procur'd for us.

Pſalm XLIII. 5, 6.

Why art thou ſo heavy, O my Soul? and why art thou ſo diſquieted within me?

O put thy truſt in God! for I will yet give him thanks, which is the help of my Countenance, and my God.

WHY art thou diſturb'd, O my Soul? Why doſt thou ſtill entertain any Doubts of the Mercy of thy God? Remember thy Creator. Who was it that made thee, without any concurrence of thy own? Who was it that form'd thy Body in ſecret, when thou wert faſhion'd in the lower parts of the Earth? He then who took care of thee, before thou hadſt any Being, Will not he take care of thee, whom he has made after his own Image? I am God's Creature, behold I turn my Thoughts to my Creator. What tho' my Nature be diſeas'd through the Infections of the Devil, tho' it be wounded and pierc'd by my Sins, thoſe Robbers of my Soul, yet does my Creator live: He who had a Power to make me, can again repair all my Breaches: He who

who made me without any Sin, ſhall be able to take from me all the Sins that have enter'd into me, and run through my whole frame, either by the ſuggeſtion of the Devil, the deluſion of my firſt Parent, or by my own actual Tranſgreſſion. My Creator is able to build me up again if he be willing, and willing he is to do it; For who can hate the Work of his own Hand? Are we not before him like Clay in the Hands of the Potter? And if he had bore any Hatred towards me, he had not at the ſame time created me. He is the Saviour of all Mankind, but eſpecially of thoſe that believe in him; wonderfully has he made me, but more wonderfully has he redeem'd me. Never did our Lord give a clearer Evidence of his Love towards us, than in his Paſſion and the Wounds he bore for us. Sure he is truly loved, for whom the only Begotten was ſent down from the Boſom of his Father; and if thou didſt not paſſionately deſire I ſhould be ſaved, O Lord Jeſu, wherefore didſt thou deſcend from thy Father? But thou didſt deſcend even to the Earth, even to Death, even to the Croſs; That God might redeem his Servant, he ſpar'd not his own Son. Surely then, with a great Love did God love Mankind, who, that he might redeem them, deliver'd up his Son to be afflicted, to be ſlain, to be

curcified. Truly, great and dear was the Price with which we were bought, therefore dear and great ought the Mercy of our Redeemer to be in our eſteem. One would almoſt think, that God loves his Elect with the ſame Love that he loved his only begotten Son; for, that for the ſake of which we lay any thing out, is of greater Value in our eſteem, than what we pay down for it: God, that he might have adopted Sons, ſpared not his own Son, who was of the ſame Nature and Eſteem with himſelf; what great thing then is it, that he ſhould prepare Manſions for us in his own Houſe, when he has already given us his own Son, in whom dwelleth the fullneſs of the Godhead bodily. Surely, where the fullneſs of the Godhead is, there is the fullneſs of eternal Glory, and eternal Life; and if in Chriſt he has given us the fullneſs of eternal Life, how will he deny us a little Part of it? Surely, with a great Love does our heavenly Father love us, his adopted Sons, for whom he has deliver'd up his only begotten one. And truly great was the Love of the Son himſelf towards us, who deliver'd up himſelf for us; that he might make us Rich, he underwent himſelf the greateſt Poverty; for he had not ſo much as a Place to lay his Head. That he might make us the Sons of God, he himſelf, condeſcended

deſcended to be Born like one of us; nor, having once finiſh'd the Work of our Redemption, does he now neglect us; but being plac'd at the Right Hand of God, he ſtill makes Interceſſion for us. What is there conducing to my Salvation, that he ſhall not prevail with his Father to give me, ſeeing, to merit my Salvation, he has freely beſtow'd himſelf upon me? What will the Father deny his Son, who was obedient to him unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs? What will the Father deny his Son, who has long ſince accepted the Price of Redemption, paid him down by this Son? My Sins may accuſe me, I will put my Truſt in this Interceeder for me; greater is he that is for me, than my Sins which are againſt me: My Weakneſs may affright me, but in his ſtrength do I glory. Let the Devil accuſe me, ſo that my Mediator pleads for me; let Heaven and Earth accuſe me, and my Iniquities render me guilty, 'tis enough for me, that he who made Heaven and Earth, and is Righteouſneſs it ſelf, prays to his Father to avert his Wrath from me. 'Tis merit enough for me to know, that no Merit of mine is ſatisfactory to God. Let me content my ſelf with this, that I have him propitious to me, againſt whom alone I have ſinned; whatever he has decreed in Chriſt not to impute to me,

ſhall be as tho' it had never been. Nor ſhall I deſpair, tho' my Sins have been both great and many, and habitual; for were I not laden with Sin, I ſhould not ſo earneſtly deſire the Imputation of his Righteouſneſs; were I not ſick, I ſhould need no Phyſician. He alone is my Phyſician, he alone is my Saviour, he alone is my Righteouſneſs, he cannot deny himſelf: I am ſick, I am guilty, I am a Sinner, I cannot deny my ſelf. Have Mercy on me, O thou that art my Phyſician, my Saviour, and my Righteouſneſs. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O Holy, Juſt and Merciful God, I know that all thy Promiſes are certain and infallible, and that the Means thy Infinite Wiſdom has contriv'd for my Redemption, cannot fail of their deſign'd Effects, unleſs it be through my own fault. Thy Son will prove a ſure and never-failing Saviour, to all thoſe who ſhall be worthy of him. O make me ſuch a one as he deſires: Let a true Faith, a ſincere Repentance, and my Life agreeable to thy Will, make me one of thoſe for whom Chriſt my Saviour died; then will I not deſpair of Mercy, tho' I have been a grievous Sinner; but have an humble and a holy Confidence, that my

Name

Name is written in Heaven: Then will I be humbly certain I ſhall be ſaved, for Infinite are his Merits, Infinite thy Mercy, and Infinite ſhall be the Happineſs of my Soul. And do thou, O Lord, when by thy Grace thou haſt made me pure and holy, communicate to my Soul a lively Hope that I ſhall be ſaved, that I may lay my ſelf down in my Grave, in a ſure and certain Hope of a Reſurrection to Eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

MEDITATION IX.

Of Loving God alone.

Pſalm LXXIII. 24.

Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire in Compariſon of thee.

ROuſe thy ſelf up, O faithful Soul, and love him who is the chiefeſt good, in whom is all the good thou can'ſt deſire, and without whom nothing is truly ſo; nothing here below can fully ſatisfy our deſires, becauſe nothing here is perfect goodneſs in it ſelf, but has only what it partakes. A

Stream of good, is deriv'd from the Divine Nature to every Created Being; but the Fountain it ſelf remains in God; Why then do we leave the Fountain, to run after the Stream? Every thing that is good in the Creature, is but as it were the Image of that perfect goodneſs which is in God, nay, which is God himſelf; Why then do our Wills catch at the Shadow, and forſake the Subſtance? The Dove from *Noah*'s Ark, could not, while the Waters mov'd upon the Face of the Earth, find where to reſt her Wings; ſo our Soul in all the variety of ſublunary enjoyments, cannot find any thing to ſatisfy its boundleſs deſires, becauſe they are all fleeting and inconſtant. Is not that Man guilty of injuſtice to himſelf, who ſets his Heart upon things below the dignity of his Nature? Now the Soul of Man is more noble than any of God's Creatures, becauſe it has been redeem'd by his own Death and Paſſion. Why then ſhould we fondly doat upon any thing in this World? Is it not contrary to that Dignity to which God has rais'd it? Whatever becomes the Object of our Love, is occaſion'd either for its Power, Wiſdom, or Beauty: Now what is there more Powerful? What more Wiſe? What more Beautiful than God? All the Power of earthly Kings, is both from him and ſubject to him: All the Wiſ-

Wiſdom of Man compar'd to that of God, is Folly: All the Beauty of the Creature is Deformity, in compariſon to him. Should a Potent King ſollicit by his Proxies a Damſel of a mean Fortune, and as mean a Birth, in order to Marry her, Would ſhe not act fooliſhly, if ſlighting the Love of ſo powerful a Prince, ſhe ſhould proſtitute her ſelf to his Agents which he ſends upon ſuch a Meſſage? 'Tis the ſame with God? he endeavours by the Beauty he has given to his Creatures, to draw us to himſelf, and raiſe our Souls to an ardent Love of him: Why then do our Souls, whom our Saviour as a Bridegroom paſſionately loves, cleave ſo faſt to thoſe Creatures which are but as Meſſengers of that Spiritual Union he deſires to have with us? The Creatures themſelves upbraid us, and cry, Why have you ſuch a Fondneſs for us? Why do you place the utmoſt of your Deſires in our Enjoyment? We are not able to ſatisfie the Extent of your Appetites, ſeek for a compleat ſatisfaction in that God, who has made both you and us. We cannot hope for a Reciprocal Love from any earthly Creature, for they did not firſt love us; but God, who is Love it ſelf, cannot but love thoſe who love him; nay, what is more, he comes out to meet us, and prevents all our Deſires towards him. How

much then ought we to love him who firſt loved us? He loved us, before we had any being; for 'tis an Inſtance of the Divine Love, that we were ever Born into the World: He lov'd us when as yet we were his Enemies; for 'tis all owing to his Love and Mercy, that he ſent his Son to redeem us: He lov'd us when we were fall'n into Sin; for 'tis of the Divine Love, that he does not deliver us over to Death, every day we ſin againſt him, but he patiently waits for our Converſion: 'Tis of the Divine Love, that over and above what we deſerve, nay, contrary to our Deſerts, he conducts us to his heavenly Palaces.

Without the Love of God we can never arrive to a ſaving Knowledge of him; without this Love all our Knowledge is unprofitable, nay, ſinful; wherefore Love exceeds the Knowledge of all Myſteries. The Devils themſelves are knowing Spirits, but 'tis the Righteous only have the Power to love God. What makes the Devil the unhappieſt of Beings? but becauſe he can't love his Maker. And why is God, on the other ſide, ſo infinitely Happy and Perfect? but becauſe his Love is univerſal, and he is delighted with the Contemplation of his own Works. Why is not the Love of God made perfect in this Life? but becauſe our Love can extend no farther than the

the knowledge of him. Now in this Life we know him only in part, as through a Glaſs, darkly; in eternal Life we ſhall be perfectly happy, becauſe our Love of God will then be perfect; we ſhall love him to Perfection, becauſe we ſhall then perfectly know him. No one can entertain hopes of the Perfection of Divine Love in another World, who in this has not begun to Cultivate the Love of God: The Kingdom of God reigning in the Heart of Man, muſt in this Life have its Beginning, otherwiſe 'twill never be conſummated in the next: Without the Love of God we have no Deſires after Heaven, How then ſhall he partake of Happineſs, who knows not how to love the Author of it? Who neither ſeeks, nor has any deſires after him? Thou ſhalt become the ſame as thy Love is, becauſe thy Love will transform thee into it ſelf: Love is the ſtrongeſt tie, becauſe there is a ſtrict Union between the Lover, and the Object of his Love. What is it that has join'd together a moſt holy God and diſſolute Sinners? What could reconcile things ſo infinitely diſtant one from the other? 'Twas Infinite Love. And that the Holineſs of God might not fall away, the infinite Ranſom of Chriſt has interceeded for us. What is it makes ſo near a Relation between God and a Believing Soul that was Created by him?

'Tis Love. In eternal Happineſs God will communicate himſelf to us in the moſt exalted manner, And why? Becauſe we ſhall then love him with the moſt exalted Tranſports of Love: Love unites and makes a total change in us. If thou lov'ſt carnal Things, thou thy ſelf art carnal; and if thou ſetteſt thy Affections here below, thou ſhalt become worldly minded: Now Fleſh and Blood ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God. If thou loveſt God and heavenly Things, the Biaſs of thy Soul ſhall incline thee towards 'em: Upon the Love of God it is thou aſcendeſt to Heaven, like *Elijah* in his fiery Chariot: The Love of God is the greateſt Pleaſure of our Minds, 'tis the Paradiſe of our Souls, it weans us from the World, it Triumphs over the Devil, ſtops the Mouth of Hell it ſelf, and opens us a Paſſage to eternal Bliſs. The Love of God is that Seal with which God diſtinguiſhes his Elect and true Believers; and will receive none at the laſt Judgment, that have not this Mark upon 'em. Faith it ſelf, by which we are both juſtified and ſaved, is not genuine, unleſs it ſhews it ſelf by Love: There is no true Faith, unleſs we have a firm aſſurance of God's Promiſes, which without the Love of God we cannot attain to; that Favour is not acknowledg'd, for which we

we are not thankful; and we can never be ſaid to be thankful to him, for whom we have no Real Love; if therefore thine be a true Faith, let it gratefully acknowledge the Favours thou haſt receiv'd from thy Redeemer; let thy acknowledgment ſhow it ſelf by thy hearty Thanks, and this thy Gratitude, will be the ſureſt Inſtance of thy Love. The Love of God is the very Life and Reſt of the Soul; when the Soul by Death departs from the Body, it no longer lives; and when God forſakes the Soul through Sin, it ſpiritually dies. God dwells by Faith in our Hearts, through Love, in our very Souls, becauſe the Love of God is diffus'd in the Hearts of his Elect, through the Holy Ghoſt. The Soul can enjoy no Tranquility without the Love of God; the World, and the Prince of it, are the Diſturbers of its Reſt; but God is the alone Repoſe. There is no peace of Conſcience, but to thoſe who are juſtified by Faith; there is no true Love of God, but in thoſe who, like Sons, have an affectionate and dutiful Confidence towards him. Let therefore the Love of our ſelves, the Love of the World, and every thing that is in it, die in us, that the Love of God may remain in our Hearts; which we beſeech thee, O heavenly Father, may be begun in this Life, and finiſh'd in eternal Glory.

The Prayer.

O God, thou chiefeſt and only Good, who art able to fill all the Deſires of my Soul, reſcue me from the daily Diſappointments I meet with from the things of this World, and ſettle my Heart and all the Faculties of my Soul upon the love of thee and thy Holineſs only. I have ſufficiently experienc'd the Vanity and Inſtability of all ſublunary Enjoyments, and my Soul within me is ſtill craving and deſirous of ſomething on which ſhe may reſt her weary Wings; fix her, O God, upon thy ſelf, be thou the only Object of her Love; Communicate to her the Excellency of thy Nature, the Perfection of thy Being, thy Infinite Goodneſs, and thy inexpreſſible Mercy, that thou may'ſt even ſo force her Love, by the Amiableneſs of thy Divine Nature, as never to remove it from thee, nor fix it upon any thing here below. In thee ſhe Lives, moves, and has her Being; on thee let her ever reſt, in thee let her find what ſhe will ever be diſappointed of, till ſhe comes to enjoy thee in thy everlaſting Kingdom. Grant this, O thou never-failing Fountain of Good, for thy Mercy's ſake. *Amen.*

MEDITATION X.

Of our Reconciliation with God.

Coloſſians I. 19, 20.

For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.

And (having made peace through the Blood of his Croſs) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, by him, I ſay, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven.

TRuly did Chriſt bear our Weakneſſes, and carry our Sorrows. O Lord Jeſu, whatever in us deſerv'd eternal Puniſhment, thou haſt transferr'd upon thy ſelf; That weight of Sin, which would have ſunk us into the Abyſs of Hell, thou haſt loaded thy ſelf with; thou wert wounded for our Iniquities, bruis'd for our Sins, and by thy Stripes we are heal'd: The Lord hath laid upon thee, the Iniquities of us all. This exchange of thine, ſtrikes us with Aſtoniſhment; thou takeſt our Sins upon thy ſelf, and in the room of 'em beſtoweſt thy Righteouſneſs; thou challengeſt to thy ſelf, that Death which was juſtly our Due, and giveſt us Life Eternal: Therefore can I by no means doubt of thy favour, or deſpair by reaſon of my Sins. The greateſt Evil

in

in us, thou haſt remov'd upon thy ſelf, how then ſhalt thou deſpiſe what is of greateſt worth in us, our Soul and Body, the Work of thine own Hands? Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy one to ſee corruption. He is truly holy whoſe Sins are taken away and blotted out; Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Iniquities are forgiven, and to whom the Lord imputes no Sin: How ſhall the Lord impute to us our Sins when he has already imputed 'em to another? For the Sins of the People he hath ſmitten his dearly beloved Son; he himſelf therefore ſhall juſtifie many, and bear their Tranſgreſſions. How will God juſtifie his own People? Hear, O my Soul, and hearken to what ſo nearly concerns thee: He ſhall juſtifie them in his knowledge, *i. e.* in the ſaving Acknowledgment, and firm Apprehenſion, through Faith, of his Mercy and Favour towards 'em in Chriſt. This is eternal Life, to acknowledge thee the only true God, and him whom thou haſt ſent, even Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore if thou confeſs the Lord Jeſus with thy Mouth, and believe in thy Heart, that God hath rais'd him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved; for Faith lays hold on the ſatisfactian of Chriſt, for he hath born the Iniquities of his People, he hath born the Sins of many, and interceeded for Sinners.

Truly

Truly few had he found Juſt, had he not, out of Mercy, receiv'd the Tranſgreſſors: Few, O Bleſſed Jeſu, hadſt thou found Juſt, hadſt thou not forgiven the unrighteous their Sins. How then ſhall Chriſt, in the Day of ſtrict Judgment, paſs Sentence upon thoſe Sins of the truly Penitent, which he has taken upon himſelf? How ſhall he condemn guilty Sinners, who himſelf became Sin for them? How ſhall he paſs Judgment upon thoſe whom he vouchſafes to call his Friends? On thoſe for whom he has paid a ſufficient Price? On thoſe for whom he himſelf died? Raiſe thy ſelf, O my Soul, and forget thy Sins, for thy Lord has paſs'd 'em by, and remembers them not againſt thee. Whom is it thou ſo much feareſt ſhould take vengeance on thy Sins? Is it not the Lord, who has himſelf made ſatisfaction for 'em? Had any one elſe paid this Ranſom for my Sins, I might then doubt whether my Righteous Judge would accept ſuch a Satisfaction; had Men, or Angels, ſatisfied for me, I might then have doubted, whether the Price of my Redemption had been ſufficient for me; but now there is not the leaſt room left me to doubt; For how ſhall he reject the Price himſelf has paid? How can that be defective or inſufficient for me, which was of God's own appointment? Why then art thou yet diſturb'd, O my Soul?

Soul? All the ways of the Lord are Mercy and Truth, for Juſt is the Lord, and Righteous is his Judgment; Why art thou diſturb'd, O my Soul? Let the Mercy of God raiſe thee up, let his Juſtice ſupport thy Spirit. If God be Juſt, he will not exact the Puniſhment of Two Perſons, for the Crime one has committed: For our Sins he ſmote his Son, How then, for the ſame Sins, ſhall he ſmite us his Servants? How ſhall he puniſh thoſe Sins in us, which he has already puniſh'd in his Son? The Veracity of God ſhall not fail for ever. I deſire not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould be converted and live, is the earneſt Aſſertion of our God. Come unto me all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you, was the loving Invitation of our Saviour. Shall we charge God falſly, and go about, by the weight of our Sins, to extinguiſh his Mercy? To charge him with falſhood, and to deny his Mercy, is a greater Sin, than the Sins of a whole World; upon which account *Judas*, by his Diſpair, was a greater Sinner than thoſe very *Jews* who Crucified our Saviour. But rather where Sin abounded, there has the Grace of God more abounded, which infinitely out-weighs the Ballance of our Sins: Sins are of Men, but Grace is from God; our Sins are temporary, but his Grace is from everlaſting

laſting to everlaſting. There has been full ſatisfaction made for my Sins; the Grace of God, by the Death of Chriſt, has again been reſtor'd to me, and ſhall be eſtabliſh'd for ever; to which, with earneſt Devotions and Supplications, I fly for Refuge.

The Prayer.

O Thou Father of Pity, and God of all Comforts, who haſt reconcil'd me to thy ſelf by the Death and Sufferings of thy dear Son, let not Sin in me, nor the Provocation of it, ever break this happy Union that is between us. As thy Mercy was, in Chriſt, reconcil'd to thy Juſtice, ſo let me not abuſe thy Mercy, and again expoſe my ſelf naked to thy juſt Wrath: Give me Reſolutions never more to offend thee, and let thy Grace keep them inviolable: Thy Arms are open to receive me, let not my Obſtinacy or Impenitence cauſe thee to cloſe them. I can now boldly come to the Throne of thy Grace, my paſt Sins ſhall not affright me from entring into this new Covenant of Peace, of which thy Son was the Bleſſed Meſſenger. Thou art a loving and condeſcending God, thou hateſt nothing but my Sins, nothing but what may hinder this great Reconciliation; and, O God, ſince there are ſuch Enemies both

to

to Thee and my own Soul, let them be as odious in my ſight, as they are in thine. Let nothing ever put me again into a State of Hoſtility with thee, my Merciful God; but let there be a Harmony of Reconciliations between Heaven and Earth, between God and my Soul. Let me firſt be reconcil'd to thee, and do thou ſeal this Reconciliation in the Blood of thy Son. Let my Life be reconcil'd to my Faith, my Conſcience to my own Breaſt, my Paſſions to my Reaſon, and my ſelf be reconcil'd in Charity to the whole World, and all this for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, the Bleſſed Peace maker, and my Eternal Saviour. *Amen.*

MEDI-

MEDITATION XI.

Of the Satisfaction that has been made for our Sins.

1 *John* IV. 10.

Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.

COME unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you, are the Words of our Saviour. Truly, O Lord Jeſu, I am loaden above what I can bear, and groan under the Burden of my Sins, but I haſten unto thee, thou Fountain of Living Water. Come thou, O Lord, unto thy Servant, that I may be able to come to thee. Unto thee, O Lord, do I come, becauſe thou firſt cam'ſt to viſit me; I come unto thee, O Lord, and earneſtly do I deſire thee, for I can find nothing that's good in my ſelf. If there was any good to be found in me, I ſhould not ſo paſſionately thirſt after thee. O Lord Jeſu, I truly labour, and am heavy laden. Nor can I compare my ſelf to any of thy Saints of old, nor to thoſe Sinners who by Repentance have turn'd to thee, unleſs the Caſe

of

of the Thief upon the Croſs may be mine: Have Mercy on me, O Lord, who hadſt pity for him even at his laſt Hour. I have liv'd a wretched Life, but I deſire to die the Death of the Righteous, and that my latter end may be like his. But Piety and Righteouſneſs are far from my Heart, therefore to thy Holineſs, and to thy Righteouſneſs, do I flee. Let thy Soul, O Lord Jeſu, which thou paidſt down as a Ranſom for many, be my Succour: Let thy moſt Holy Body, which was, for my ſake, ſcourg'd, ſpit upon, buffeted, and crown'd with Thorns, and at laſt nail'd to the accurſed Tree, be my help: Let thy Sacred Blood, O Jeſu, that in thy Sufferings and laſt Agonies thou ſhed'ſt for me, and which cleanſeth us from all Sin, be my defence: Let thy Divinity, which ſuſtain'd thy Human Nature under thy Paſſion, which, while it withdrew it ſelf from exerting its Almighty Power, the great Myſtery of my Redemption was finiſh'd, and which Divinity of thine added an infinite weight and value to thy Sufferings, inſomuch that God, at the expence of his own Blood, reconcil'd me, a miſerable Sinner, to himſelf; Let this thy Divinity come in to my Aſſiſtance; let thy Wounds, in which there is all healing Vertue, be my help; let thy moſt Holy Paſſion, and the Merits of it, which is my laſt Refuge,

fuge, and only Remedy for my Sins, bring me comfort and ſupport under all my Afflictions, for what thou haſt ſuffer'd, was for my ſake; what therefore thou doſt merit by it, thou merit'ſt for me, and for my unworthineſs. God therefore recommends his great Love in us, and by an Inſtance above the Comprehenſion of Men or Angels, proves it to us, in that Chriſt died for us, when as yet we were Sinners, nay, the Enemies of God. Who is not ſtruck with wonder, who is not amaz'd, when he conſiders that the Son of God in the higheſt Mercy, unask'd, nay, hated by Men, prays to divert his Father's Wrath from ſinful Man, his very Enemies? and not only prays, but fully ſatisfies the Divine Juſtice, by being born into the World in a mean Condition, by leading a moſt holy Life, by undergoing moſt bitter Sufferings, and at laſt dying the moſt cruel Death? O Lord Jeſu, who pray'dſt to thy Father, who ſuffer'dſt and dy'dſt for me, before I could ſo much as deſire thy Paſſion, or by my Prayers ſollicit thee to lay down ſo great a Price for my Redemption, how canſt thou caſt me off from thy Preſence? How canſt thou deny me the Benefits of thy moſt holy Paſſion, ſince I now cry unto thee from the Deep, and by my Tears and Groans earneſtly beg thy Merits may be ſufficient for me? I was thy Enemy by Nature,

Nature, but ſince thou haſt laid down thy Life for me, I am become thy Friend, thy Brother, and thy Son through Grace. Thou hadſt regard to me when I was thy Enemy, and when as yet I pray'd not unto thee: How ſhalt thou caſt me off now I am thy Friend, and ſeeking to thee with Tears and earneſt Supplications? Thou wilt not reject him that comes unto thee, becauſe thy Word is Truth. Thou haſt ſpoken to us in Spirit and Truth, and from thee we receive the Words of Eternal Life. Attend therefore, and raiſe thy ſelf, O my Soul: We were formerly Sinners by Nature, but now we are become Righteous through his Grace: We were formerly Enemies, but now are we truly his Friends and Kindred: Our Refuge before was in the Death of Chriſt, but now is it in his Life: We were formerly dead in our Sins, but now are we made alive in Chriſt. O the exceſſive Love of God wherewith he has loved us! O the abundant Riches of his Divine Grace, by which he has made us to ſit down with him in heavenly Places! O the Bowels of the Mercy of our God, in which the day Spring from on high hath viſited us! If the Death of Chriſt has brought us Righteouſneſs and Life, what will the Life he leads above, at the right Hand of his Father, be able to do for us? If our dying Saviour

paid our Ranſom to his Father, what will our living Saviour do, who now interceeds for us? for Chriſt lives and dwells in our Hearts, if the remembrance of his meritorious Death and Sufferings be but kept alive by us, and encourag'd. Draw me, O Lord Jeſu, that I may hereafter enjoy that true and ſubſtantial Happineſs, which in this Life, with a well grounded hope, I impatiently wait for: Let thy Servant, I beſeech thee, be with thee, and behold that Brightneſs of Glory which thy Father has given thee; let him dwell in that Manſion which thou haſt prepar'd in thy Father's Houſe for him. Bleſſed are they who dwell in thy Houſe, O Lord; they ſhall be praiſing thy Name from Generation to Generation.

The Prayer.

ALmighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender Mercy didſt give thine only Son Jeſus Chriſt to ſuffer Death upon the Croſs for our Redemption, who made there (by his own Oblation of himſelf once offer'd) a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; I Laud and Bleſs thy Great and Holy Name, for that Exceſs of Mercy ſhow'd by thee, in accepting the Death and Merits of my Saviour ſo fully

fully in my behalf: His was the Smart, and mine the Comfort; his were the Sufferings, but mine the Mercy; he felt the Thorns, but 'tis I ſhall have the Crown; he paid the Price, and I enjoy the Benefits of the Purchaſe; he bore the Puniſhment for Sin, not for his own, but for mine. Thou haſt declar'd thy ſelf fully ſatisfied for my Sins, O blot them out of thy Remembrance, that they may not appear againſt me at the great Day of his Appearance. Thou art ſatisfied with his holy Sacrifice, O give me the ſatisfaction of thy Grace, that I may no more offend thy Mercy, nor the Love of him who was contented, at ſo dear a Price, to purchaſe my Redemption. Have Mercy upon me, have Mercy upon me moſt Merciful Father, for thy Son, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *Amen* and *Amen*.

MEDI-

MEDITATION XII.

Of the Nature and Property of a True Faith.

Heb. XI. 1.

Now Faith is the Subſtance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not ſeen.

O My beloved Soul, contemplate the Vertues of a true Faith, and be thankful to God, who is the only Giver of it. 'Tis Faith alone by which we are engrafted into our Saviour; as the Branches derive their Succour from the Vine, ſo from him it is, that we derive our Life, our Righteouſneſs, and our Salvation. *Adam* fell from the Favour of God, and by his Infidelity loſt the Image of his Maker; but we, on the other hand, are receiv'd into his Favour, and the likeneſs of God begins again, through Faith, to be new moulded in us. Chriſt, through Faith, becomes ours, and dwells in us; and where Chriſt is, there is the Grace and Favour of God, upon which depends our Heirſhips to eternal Life. By Faith, *Abel* offer'd up a more acceptable Sacrifice than *Cain*; thus, through Faith, we offer up to God our Spi-

ritual

ritual Sacrifices, to wit, the Fruit of our Lips. By Faith, *Enoch* was taken up into Heaven; thus Faith, from converſing here below, tranſlates us into the Society of Heaven, even while we are in this Life: For Chriſt even now dwells in us, and we inherit eternal Life, tho' vail'd with a Covering of our Fleſh. By Faith, *Noah* prepar'd himſelf an Ark; by the ſame Faith we make our Entrance into the Church of Chriſt, in which our Souls are ſaved, while the Unbelievers periſh in the vaſt Ocean of this World. By Faith, *Abraham* left an Idolatrous Land; by the ſame Faith we do as it were go out of our ſelves, and forſaking our neareſt Friends, follow the Commands of our Saviour, who invites us to himſelf. By Faith, he ſojourn'd in a ſtrange Country, waiting for the Promis'd Land; by the ſame Faith do we patiently expect the *Jeruſalem* that is above, which God has built for us in the Heavens. We are all Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, but by the ſtrength of Faith, we ardently deſire to arrive at a heavenly Country, our home, where we muſt dwell for ever. By Faith, *Sarah*, in her old Age, conceiv'd her Son *Iſaac*; by the ſame Faith, we being ſpiritually dead, receive ſtrength through the Spirit, to conceive Chriſt in our Hearts: For as Chriſt was once conceiv'd in the unſpotted

unſpotted Womb of the Bleſſed Virgin, ſo is he daily rais'd up, in every believing Soul that keeps it ſelf unſpotted from the Defilements of the World. By Faith, *Abraham* offer'd up his Son *Iſaac*; by the ſame Faith do we crucifie and offer up in a Spiritual Sacrifice, the darling Affections of our Souls; for he who deſires to be the Diſciple of his Saviour, muſt even deny himſelf, and renounce his own Will, the Honours of the World, and all fondneſs of himſelf. By Faith, *Iſaac* bleſs'd his Son *Jacob*; by the ſame Faith are we made Partakers of the Divine Bleſſings; for in Chriſt, the Seed of *Abraham*, are all the Nations of the Earth bleſs'd. By Faith, *Joſeph*, when he died, made mention of the departing of the Children of *Iſrael*, and gave commandment concerning his Bones; by the ſame Faith do we wait for our Deliverance out of the Bondage of this World, and the Reſurrection of the Body to Eternal Life. By Faith, *Moſes* was hid Three Months of his Parents; by the ſame Faith are we protected from the Tyranny of our accurſed Enemy, till the time come, that God ſhall lead us into his Royal Palace, and makes us Spirits, cloath'd with all the Ornaments of Majeſty. By Faith, *Moſes* choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to poſſeſs all the

Glory and Treaſures of *Egypt*; and 'tis the ſame Faith that begets in us a noble Contempt of all the Glories and Honours, the Riches and Pleaſures of this Life, and fires our Breaſts with paſſionate Deſires after a Kingdom that is above. By Faith it is, we chooſe rather the Ignominy our Saviour underwent, than all the Treaſures of the Earth. By Faith, *Moſes* forſook *Egypt*, not fearing the Wrath of *Pharoah*; 'tis the ſame Faith that ſupports and bears us up, againſt all the Terrors of the moſt enrag'd Tyranny, that we ſink not, nor are over diſmay'd at their Threats, but dare, with a firmneſs and conſtancy of Mind, obey God rather than Man. Through Faith, *Iſrael* kept the Paſſover; by the ſame Faith do we eat the Supper of the Paſchal Lamb; Chriſt, our Paſchal Lamb, is ſacrific'd for us, whoſe Fleſh is Meat indeed, and whoſe Blood is Drink indeed. By Faith, the *Iſraelites* paſs'd through the *Red-Sea*; by Faith do we paſs the Waves of a troubleſome World. By Faith, the Walls of *Jericho* fell down; by the ſame Faith do we beat down all the ſtrong Holds of Satan. By Faith, the Harlot *Rahab* periſh'd not; by the ſame Faith ſhall we be preſerv'd in the final Diſſolution of the World. By Faith, our Fathers ſubdu'd Kingdoms, ſtopp'd the Mouths of Lions, quench'd the Violence

Violence of Fire; by the ſame Faith do we triumph over the Kingdom of Darkneſs, eſcape the Fury and Deſigns of the grand Deſtroyer, and are deliver'd from the Burnings of unquenchable Fire.

True Faith is not a bare Aſſent of our Minds, nor an outward profeſſion of its Articles, but a lively and efficacious compliance with the Author of our Redemption, as he is propos'd to us in the Goſpel; 'tis the moſt hearty perſwaſion of God's Love to us, 'tis that which calms all the Diſquietudes of our Hearts, by the aſſurance we have in him; 'tis the Peace of our Conſciences, relying upon the Merits of our Saviour. A Faith that ſprings from the Seed of the Divine Word; for the Seed and the Spirit are one; but the Word is that which conveys the Spirit into our Souls: The Fruit anſwers the Nature of the Seed from whence it ſprings.

Faith is that Divine Fruit, therefore the Seed, the Word of God, muſt be always with us, as, at the firſt Creation, Light ſprung forth at the Word of God, ſo the light of Truth ſhining upon our Hearts, proceeds from the light of God's Word: In thy Light ſhall we ſee light ſaith the Pſalmiſt. And ſince, by Faith, ſo near a Union is made between Chriſt and our

Souls, therefore is Faith the Original all our Vertues; where Faith is, there is Chriſt; where Chriſt is, there are the Graces of a holy Life, Humility, Meekneſs, and a true Love of God: Chriſt can never be ſeparated from the Bleſſed Spirit, and where that is, there is true Holineſs; but the ſanctifying Spirit of God, cannot be in an unholy Life, nor Chriſt be where his Spirit is wanting, and where Chriſt is not in the Heart, there can be no true Faith; whatever Shoot derives not its Life and Succour from the Vine it ſelf, is not to be accounted as a Branch of it; nor can we be ſaid to be engrafted in Chriſt through Faith, unleſs we draw all our Life and Vertue from him. Faith is our Spiritual Light, for through Faith are our Hearts enlightned; 'tis this, that with the kindly Influence of its Rays produces all our good Works; and where theſe Beams of a holy Life diſplay not themſelves, there the true Light of Faith is not yet riſen upon our Souls. Evil Works are the Works of Darkneſs; but Faith is a bright ſhining Light: Now what Communion can there be between Light and Darkneſs? Evil Works are that Seed the Enemy ſows upon our Hearts; but Faith is the Seed of Chriſt's own ſowing: What Communion then can there be between Chriſt and *Belial?* By Faith our Hearts are purified: How then

can

can there be an inward Purity of Heart, where our Words and Actions are outwardly impure? Faith is our Victory by which we Triumph: How then can there be a true Faith, where our Carnal Affections ſubdue the Graces of God's Spirit, and lead it Captive at their Will? Through Faith we have Chriſt dwelling in us, and in Chriſt we have Eternal Life; but no impenitent and reſolute Sinner, can be Partaker of Eternal Happineſs: How then ſhall they plead, to have any ſhare in Chriſt, or lay any Claim to a true Faith? Do thou, O Holy Jeſu, make the Light of a true Faith ſhine in our Hearts, that through Faith we may obtain Eternal Salvation for our Souls.

The Prayer.

I Believe, O Lord, that Jeſus is thy Son, That he came down from Heaven, and that he laid down his Life for my Sins, and the Sins of the whole World. I believe all that he hath taught, the Immortality of my Soul, the Reſurrection of my Body, the Rewards and Puniſhments of another Life. I know no other way of being ſaved, but in and through him my Bleſſed Redeemer! In this Faith let me overcome the World, and all the ſinful Temptations of it. Let it

influence all the Actions of my Life, and let me ever ſhow the ſtrength of this Faith upon my Soul, by all the Works of my moſt holy Profeſſion. Let not the vain Philoſophy of Men of perverſe Reaſoning, ever betray me into Infidelity; nor my own Sins encline me to ſeek for Arguments to weaken my Faith. Make me truly ſenſible, what an accurs'd Intereſt that muſt be, my Sins wou'd perſwade me to, that there is no God, no Heaven to reward my Services, no Hell to Puniſh me; no Saviour to interceed for me, and no Religion but that my own Nature directs me in. But, O Lord, as I have not ſo learn'd Chriſt, ſo never ſuffer me to relinquiſh my Faith and Confidence in him. In this Faith unmov'd let me live, and in this Faith let me die, by the Power of thy Grace and holy Spirit, O Bleſſed Jeſu, the Author and Finiſher of it. *Amen.*

MEDI-

MEDITATION XIII.

Of the Spiritual Marriage of Chriſt and the Soul.

Rev. XIX. 7, 8.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: For the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and, his Wife hath made herſelf ready.

And to her was granted, that ſhe ſhou'd be arrayed in fine Linnen, clean and white; for the fine Linnen is the Righteouſneſs of Saints.

I Will Eſpouſe thee unto me for ever, ſays our Saviour to a Believing Soul. He vouchſaf'd to be preſent at the Marriage in *Cana* of *Galilee*, to ſhew us, that he came down upon Earth, to the Spiritual Marriage between himſelf and our Souls. Be exceeding Joyful in the Lord, and rejoice, O Faithful Soul, in thy God, who cloaths thee with the Garments of Salvation, and covers thee with the Vail of Righteouſneſs, like a Bride bedeck'd with Jewels. Rejoice for the Honour of thy Bridegoom, for the Comlineſs of his Countenance, and for the Love he has towards thee. He is honourable in the higheſt; for he is true God, bleſſed for Ever. How great then muſt the

Worth of a Faithful Soul be, which himſelf made, when he who made it is for eſpouſing it to himſelf? His Beauty exceeds Imagination, for he is Beautiful above the Children of Men, for they beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten of the Father: His Countenance caſt a luſtre like the Sun, his Garments were as white as Snow, a lovely Grace is ſealed on his Lips, he is crown'd with Glory and Honour: What an Inſtance of Pity then muſt it be, that he, who is Beauty it ſelf, ſhould not diſdain to make choice of the Soul of ſinful Man for his Bride, tho' deform'd with the Spots of corrupted Nature. On the Bridegroom's ſide there is the height of Majeſty, there is an exceſs of Beauty; but in the Bride whom he has choſen, nothing but deformity; and yet greater is the Bridegroom's Love towards this his Bride, then hers towards her moſt Honourable and moſt Beautiful Lord. Conſider, O Faithful Soul, the immenſe Love of thy Spouſe! 'twas Love that drew him down from his Father, bound him to the Tree, nail'd him to his Croſs, enclos'd him in his Sepulchre, and ſunk him down into the innermoſt parts of the Earth. What could cauſe all theſe his Sufferings, but the Love he bore towards the Soul he had eſpous'd? But ſure our Hearts are more obdurate than Stone, that ſo ſtrong a Chain of

of ſuch Divine Love is not able to elevate them towards that Heaven, from whence it drew down God himſelf for Man's ſake. His Spouſe was naked, nor could ſhe appear in ſo deſpicable a condition in the Court of Heaven; but he cloath'd her with the Garments of Salvation and Righteouſneſs. When ſhe lay wrapp'd up in the filthy Mantle of her Sins, and in the patch'd and ragged cloathing of her Iniquites, he gave her the richeſt and fineſt Linnen wherewithal to cover her Nakedneſs: Linnen, that is the Juſtification of his Saints, that Garment is their Righteouſneſs, which he has procur'd for them by his Death and Paſſion. *Jacob* ſerv'd Fourteen Years, that he might gain *Rachel*: Chriſt, for almoſt Thirty Years, underwent Hunger and Thirſt, Cold and Poverty, Ignominy and Diſgrace, Chains and Scourgings, Gall and Vinegar, nay Death upon the Croſs, that he might gain the Love of a faithful Soul. *Sampſon* went down and ſought himſelf a Wife from among the Daughters of the *Philiſtines*, a People that were decreed for ruin: The Son of God came down, and choſe himſelf a Spouſe from among Men, who were condemn'd and deliver'd over to Eternal Death. The whole Lineage, from which the Spouſe was deſcended, was at enmity with his Father; but he by his moſt bitter

Paſſion, reconcil'd them to him. His Spouſe lay wallowing in her own Blood, was caſt out upon the Face of the Earth; but he waſh'd her with the Water of Baptiſm, made her clean in the Laver of Regeneration, and wip'd off her Blood with his own; for the Blood of the Son of God cleanſeth us from all Sin. She was ugly and defil'd; but he anointed her with the Oil of his Grace and Mercy. She was not cloath'd as became the Spouſe of Chriſt; but he gave her the Ornaments of Vertue, and the Gifts of his holy Spirit. She was miſerably Poor, and had not wherewithal to make the ſmalleſt Payment; he therefore made over to her the Earneſt of his Spirit, and accepted from her the Earneſt of her Fleſh, and carried it with him into Heaven. She was ready to periſh with Hunger; but he fed her with the fineſt Flour, with Oil and Honey, and continues to feed her with his own Body and Blood to Eternal Life. She is often diſobedient, and breaks the Troth ſhe plighted to him at her Marriage, and plays the Harlot with the World, and the Prince of it; but he, out of his immenſe Love, receives her again into Favour, as often as with true Repentance ſhe returns home to him. Acknowledge, O my Soul, all theſe Inſtances of Infinite Love! Be enamour'd, O my Soul, with that Love of his,

his, by which he came down into the Womb of the Bleſſed Virgin! So much more ought we to love him than our ſelves, by how much he excells us, who gave himſelf up for us. Let our whole Life be made conformable to him, who was ſo conformable to us for our ſakes. 'Tis the higheſt ingratitude not to love him who firſt loved us; How greatly does he deſerve our Love, who for us did as it were forget his own Majeſty! O happy Soul, which is ſo nearly united to its Saviour, by the Bands of this Spiritual Marriage! ſhe may ſafely, and with a holy Confidence, apply to her ſelf all the Benefits of his Paſſion. 'Tis by Faith alone, we are made the happy Partakers of this Spiritutl Marriage, as it is written, I will eſpouſe thee to my ſelf in Faithfulneſs. 'Tis Faith engrafts us the Branches into Chriſt who is the Spiritual Vine, that we may draw from him our life and ſtrength: And as the Husband and Wife are no longer Two, but one Fleſh; ſo thoſe who through Faith ſhelter themſelves under their Saviour's Wing, become one Spirit with him; for by Faith Chriſt dwells in their Hearts, and if it be real, it grows powerful through Love, and productive of good Works. As under the Law, the Prieſts were oblig'd to Marry Virgins, that had not been defil'd; ſo that Holy High-Prieſt of ours, ſpiritually joins him-

himſelf to ſuch unſpotted Souls, who keep themſelves Pure and Chaſt from the Embraces of the Devil, the World, and their own Fleſh. Do thou, O Chriſt, make us worthy to enter into the Marriage of the Lamb.

The Prayer.

O Holy and Immaculate Jeſu, thou in whom my Soul delighteth, deſcend by thy Grace and Bleſſed Spirit into my Heart, Communicate to my Soul thoſe unſpeakable Comforts that always go along with thee where-ever thou doſt vouchſafe to dwell. What Tongue is able to ſpeak thoſe inward Joys, that ariſe from the Happineſs of that Myſterious Union between thee and every pious Soul? What Mercy is it, when thou by thy Grace prepareſt a Soul for thine own Reception? O do thou purge away my Droſs, purifie all my Affections, rectifie my Will, enlighten my Underſtanding, ſtill my inordinate Paſſions; and then come, Lord Jeſus, come and take up thy Habitation with me! My Soul longs for thee, and is impatient her Divine Gueſt ſhall make his Entry. Cloath her, O Lord, with the Wedding-Garment, and then lead her to the Marriage of thee the Lamb, that ſhe may ſit down with thee in thy heavenly Places,

places, and ſing Eternal Halalujahs, to thee, O Father, thee, O Son, and thee, O Holy Ghoſt, one God bleſſed for ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XIV.

Of the Myſteries of Chriſt's Incarnation.

1 Tim. III. 16.

Without Controverſy great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the Fleſh.

LET us withdraw our Thoughts a while from the World, and contemplate the Myſteries of our Saviour's Birth. The Son of God came down to us from Heaven, that we might obtain the Adoption of Sons: God became Man, that Man might partake of the Divine Favour and Nature. Chriſt choſe to appear in the World and be born in the latter days, to ſhew us, that the benefits of his Incarnation did not reſpect this preſent Life, but Eternity. He who was the bleſſed Peace-maker between God and Man, choſe to appear in the Reign of a Peaceful Prince, who had given a Univerſal reſt to the World from the Storms of War: He

He choſe a time for his entry, when the *Iſraelites* were under the hardſhips of Slavery and Servitude, who himſelf was our Mighty Deliverer: He whoſe Kingdom was not of this World, was willing to be born into it under the Government of a Foreign Power. He was deliver'd by a pure Virgin, to put us in mind, that he himſelf is not conceiv'd nor born but in the Hearts of thoſe, who are Spiritually Virgins before him, to wit, whoſe minds are not wedded to the World, nor to the Devil, but to God by a Spiritual Union. He was born Pure and Holy, that he might ſanctify the Impure and Corrupted Nature in which we are born into the World. He was born of a Virgin that was eſpous'd, that he might make Matrimony, his own Inſtitution, honourable among Men. He was born in the darkneſs of the Night, who was the true Light of the World ſhining in dark places. He who is the true Food and Nouriſhment of our Souls was laid in a Manger. He was born among the Beaſts of the Field, that he might reſtore Men to their former dignity, who by their Sins too much reſembled them. He was born in *Bethlem*, which by Interpretation, is the Houſe of Bread, who brought down with him the true living Bread by which our Souls are plentifully fed. He was the only and firſt born of his Mother here on Earth, who

who according to his Divine Nature was the firſt and only begotten of his Father in Heaven. He was born Poor and Indigent, that he might procure for us the Riches of Heaven. He was born in a filthy Stable, that he might lead us into the Court and Palace of his Father above. He was ſent as an Ambaſſador to lay before us the benefits that were deſign'd us by our Redemption, the greatneſs of which no Man on Earth was ſenſible of. He the Heavenly Meſſenger, brought us the glad tidings of thoſe Bleſſings that are reſerv'd for us at his Right hand above. The Hoſt of Angels rejoice, who by the Incarnation of the Son of God, hope to have us partakers with them in their Happineſs. This ſo great a Myſtery was firſt reveal'd to Shepherds; becauſe the Shepherd of our Souls was come at that time to bring back the loſt Sheep into the right way. The matter of ſo great joy was reveal'd to the deſpis'd and mean; becauſe no Man can have a ſhare in it, but he that is deſpicable in his own Eyes. The Birth of our Saviour was reveal'd to theſe Shepherds while they were watching over their Flocks by Night, becauſe thoſe who ſleep ſecurely over their Sins, ſhall not enjoy the bleſſings of his Nativity, but thoſe only whoſe Hearts are awake towards God. The Bleſſed Choir of the Heavenly Hoſt, who were griev'd at

the

the ſin of our firſt Parents, now ſhout for joy. The Brightneſs of our Lord and King ſhines forth in the higheſt Heavens, the meanneſs of whoſe Birth was deſpis'd upon Earth. The Angels bid them not fear, for there was a Child Born that ſhould remove far from them all occaſion of their fears. Joy was proclaim'd from Heaven, becauſe the Author and Giver of this Joy was at that time Born. They were commanded to rejoyce, becauſe the Enmity between God and Man, the true cauſe of all our ſorrow was remov'd from them. Glory was Sung to God in the higheſt, which our firſt Parent wilfully robb'd him of, by his Diſobedience. A true Peace was procur'd for us by his Birth; for till then Men were Enemies to God, their own Conſciences were againſt them, and they had continual remorſes in their own Breaſts. True Peace was again reſtor'd to the World; for he who led us Captive at his will, was at this time himſelf overcome. Let us alſo with the Shepherds go and approach the Manger were our Saviour lay; let us ſeek for him in his Church, and we ſhall find this Infant wrapp'd in Swadling Cloaths in the Sacred Writings. Let us with the Holy Mother of our Lord lay up in our Hearts the words of this Stupendious Myſtery, and let us every day we live with a grateful remembrance reflect upon

on them in our Thoughts. Let us tune our Voices in conſort with the Angels above, and return him the deſerv'd Praiſes of all his Mercies. Let us rejoyce and ſhout for joy with all the Company of Heaven. For if the Angels at our happineſs are ſo feelingly affected, what Tranſports of joy ſhould we expreſs, to whom the Child Jeſus was given, and condeſcended to be born? If the *Iſraelites* ſhouted for joy when the Ark of the Covenant was brought back to them again, that Ark that was but the Type of our Saviour's Incarnation: How much more ought we to rejoyce, to whom the Lord himſelf, having taken our Nature upon him, vouchſafed to come down and dwell among us? If *Abraham* rejoyc'd when he ſaw this day, and our Lord once appear'd to him in a Bodily ſhape; What ought we to do, whoſe Nature he has united to himſelf by an everlaſting and inviolable Covenant? Let us ſtand a while and admire the immenſe Goodneſs of our God, who when we could not aſcend to him, he himſelf willingly came down to us. Let us admire the Immenſity of his Power, who out of two things ſo vaſtly diſtant, as the Divine and Human Natures, could make one by ſo near a Union, that one and the ſame Perſon ſhould be both God and Man. Let us ſtand aſtoniſh'd at the Infinite Wiſdom of God, who contriv'd ſuch a way

for

for our Redemption, that neither Men nor Angels are able to comprehend nor look into. Infinite Goodneſs was offended, and a ſatisfaction that muſt be Infinite was exacted for it: Man had offended God, and from Man the ſatisfaction was requir'd; but Man had not wherewithal to do it, nor could the Divine Juſtice be atton'd without a price firſt paid down that ſhould be of Infinite value. God therefore became Man, that he who had ſinn'd, might ſatisfy for it; and that he who was Infinite, might pay down the Infinite Ranſom. Let us admire at this aſtoniſhing Reconciliation of Divine Love and Juſtice: What no Creature, before God was pleas'd to do it, could reveal, no Creature find it out, nor now it is reveal'd, can fully comprehend. Let us Reverence theſe Myſteries, and not endeavour too curiouſly to pry into them; let us deſire to look into them, tho 'tis impoſſible for us wholly to underſtand them: Let us rather acknowledge how ignorant and ſhort-ſighted we are, than go about to deny the Almighty Power of God.

The

The Prayer.

SUffer me, O thou Holy Child of God with the deepeſt Humility to approach the place of thy Nativity, not to enquire into the Myſtery of thy Incarnation, or to ask how thy Divinity cou'd be united to our Fleſh; but to Admire, Adore, and Praiſe thee for thy great Condeſcention. Lord, what was Man that thou ſhoud'ſt thus and in ſuch away be mindful of him? Or the Son of Man that thou ſhoud'ſt thus regard him? O Stupendious Mercy! That the Infirmities of our Nature ſhou'd move thy Love, and prevail with thee to take them upon thee! I am loſt in the depths of this Great Myſtery, and my Soul is overcharg'd with the amazing thoughts of it that ariſe within me! O let me recover my ſelf to Adore thee my Saviour, God and Man in my Nature, and let the Angels that attended upon thy Birth, fill my Mouth with the moſt ſacred Anthem that was ever ſung or heard by Human Ears. Glory be to God on High, and in Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XV.

Of the ſaving benefits of Chriſt's Incarnation.

Epheſ. III. 18, 19.

That ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height:

And to know the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be fill'd with all the fulneſs of God.

I Bring you Tidings of great Joy, was the Salutation of an Angel at our Saviours Birth. Great was that Joy indeed, and greater than Man had Faculties to conceive. 'Twas the height of Miſery that we lay bound under the Wrath of God, under the Power of the Devil, and under the Sentence of Eternal Damnation: And it yet added to his Miſery, that Man was either Ignorant, or not ſenſibly touch'd with the Condition he was in: But now ſince the appearance of the Son of God our Joy is increas'd, for he who was born into the World, has freed us from all thoſe miſeries under which we lay. He came as the great Phyſician to heal the ſickneſſes of our Souls, as a Redeemer to knock off our Chains, as the way to guide us into the ſtrait

ſtrait Paths, as the Life, to us who were dead in our Treſpaſſes and Sins, as Salvation to the Condemn'd: As *Moſes* was ſent by God to deliver the *Iſraelites* from their Bondage in the Land of *Egypt:* So is Chriſt the bleſſed Meſſenger of his Father, ſent to free Mankind from a worſe Bondage, even that of Hell. As the Dove, when the Waters of the Deluge were dried up upon the face of the Earth, return'd back to *Noah*'s Ark with an Olive branch in her Mouth: So came our Saviour down, to preach Peace, and the reconcilement that was made between God and Man. Great reaſon then have we to rejoyce, and enlarge our Conceptions of the mercy of our good God. He who ſo highly lov'd us while we were yet his Enemies, as not to diſdain to take our Humane Nature into the neareſt embraces of his Godhead; what good thing ſhall he withold from us who are related to him by ſo cloſe a tie, as the participation of the ſame Fleſh? Who ever hated his own Fleſh? How then ſhall Mercy that is Infinite ever caſt us off from him, who are partakers of the ſame Nature with him? Who, with the moſt exalted reach of Thought, much leſs with Words, can reach the height of this Stupendious Myſtery? There is in it the higheſt Honour and the meaneſt Vileneſs; the greateſt Power and the loweſt Weakneſs; an exceſs of Majeſty and extream

extream Frailty. What more Sublime than God, and what more vile than Man? What greater than the Power of the Almighty, and what can there be weaker than the Infirmities of Man? What can we conceive more Glorious than God, and what more frail than our ſelves? Yet was it this Almighty Power, which contriv'd a means to join all theſe together, when his Infinite Juſtice that had been offended neceſſarily call'd for ſuch a Union. What Conception can Man have of ſo great a Myſtery? An Infinite and Adequate Satisfaction was demanded for the Offence of Man; becauſe Man had turn'd himſelf away from an infinitely good God: But what could be equivelent to the Infinity of God's Nature? What then does Infinite Juſtice do, but as it were from it ſelf take a ſufficient ſatisfaction made to it ſelf; and God made us ſuffer in our Fleſh, leaſt we who are the Work of his hands ſhould ſenſibly feel an Eternity of Miſery. Infinite goodneſs was offended, none but an Infinitely Powerful Mediator could interceed for us: And what but God is Infinite? God therefore himſelf reconcil'd a ſinful World, and became a Mediator to himſelf for us. God with the price of his own Blood, purchas'd the Redemption of Mankind. O who is able to conceive this ſo great a Myſtery? The Creator of all things was offended, nor was

the

the Creature ſollicitous for an attonement or the mitigation of his Wrath; he againſt whom the offence was committed, taking upon him our Fleſh, became our great Reconciler to himſelf. Man had deſerted God, and revolted from him to his greateſt Enemy; but that very God from whom he deſerted, with a tender concern ſeeks after his Deſerter, and Compaſſionately invites him back again to his Service. The farther Men retreated from the Infinite goodneſs of God, the deeper he ſunk into an Infinity of Miſery; but that immenſe Goodneſs having paid down a Ranſom of Infinite value for him, reſcüed his own Creature from an immenſe Puniſhment. Was not this boundleſs Mercy, a Mercy not to be fathom'd by the ſhallow and finite Reaſon and utmoſt Thoughts of Man? Our Nature is become more glorious by our Redeemer, than it was diſgrac'd by the Sin of our firſt Parent. We have regain'd more in Chriſt, than we loſt in *Adam*. Sin had abounded in the World, but the Grace of God has more abounded. In *Adam* we loſt our Primitive Innocence, in Chriſt we regain a Righteouſneſs that ſhall be ſufficient for us. Let others juſtly wonder at the Power of God to puniſh Sin; more ſtill, is to be admir'd, the Divine Mercy in pardoning it: Tho' both are Infinite, for ſuch as his Mercy is, ſuch is his Power. Let others

ſtand

ſtand amaz'd at the Beauty of the Creation; there is a greater pleaſure ſpreads it ſelf o'er my Soul when I contemplate my Redemption; tho' to Create and to Redeem, are the work of Infinite Power. To Create Man, who could deſerve nothing at the hands of God, before he had a Being, was in it ſelf a Work truly great: But greater yet does it ſeem, to Redeem Man when he had deſerv'd his Wrath, and to take the attonement for what Man had deſerv'd upon himſelf. It ſtrikes wonder into us, when we conſider how our Fleſh and Bones are form'd in us by God; but yet more wonderful is it, that God himſelf ſhou'd condeſcend to become Fleſh of our Fleſh, and Bone of our Bone. O be thankful my Soul, to thy God who made thee, when as yet thou hadſt no Being; who redeem'd thee, when thou laid'ſt under the Sentence of thy Sins; who has prepar'd for thee Joys unſpeakable, if through Faith thou dependeſt upon the Merits of thy Redeemer.

The Prayer.

ALmighty God who haſt given us thy only begotten Son, to take our Nature upon him, and to be born of a Pure Virgin; grant that I being regenerate and made thy Child by Adoption and Grace, may

may daily be renew'd by thy Holy Spirit. This was the great end of his Manifeſtation in the Fleſh, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and make us the Sons of God and Heirs of Eternal Life. Grant I beſeech thee, that having this hope, I may purify my ſelf, even as he is pure; that when he ſhall again appear with Power and great Glory, I may be made like unto him in his Glorious Kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghoſt, he liveth and reigneth one God, World without end. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XVI.

Of the Spiritual Repaſt of a Pious Soul.

Matt. XI. 28.

Come unto me all ye that Labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh ye.

GOD out of his extream Bounty has prepar'd a Spiritual Repaſt for our Souls, but we who are to be the Gueſts muſt bring Affections that hunger and thirſt after it. He can't reliſh the ſweetneſs of this Spiritual Banquet, who never takes it; nor he taſt it, who never hungers after it. To believe in

Chriſt, is to approach this heavenly Feaſt. But no Man expreſſes this Faith in his Saviour, but he who having confeſs'd his Sins, Repents and is Converted. Contrition is the ſpiritual hunger of our Souls; and Faith is the ſpiritual food with which they are fed; God gave the *Iſraelites* Manna in the Wilderneſs to eat, the Bread of Angels. In this Banquet of the Goſpel of his Son, God gives us heavenly Manna, the influences of his Grace, the Pardon of our Sins, and what is above all this, his own Son, who precides over the Angels above. Chriſt is that true Bread of Heaven, that came down from thence, to give Life to the World. The ſenſual Mind immers'd in the Pleaſures of this Life, has no longings after the ſweetneſs of this ſpiritual Food. The outward Man, has no perception of thoſe Divine ſweets that ſhould refreſh his inward Soul. When our daily Suſtenence, and the comforts of this Life fail, God feeds us with the hidden Manna of the Heart, in our paſſage through the Wilderneſs of this World. Thoſe who had married Wives in the Goſpel were backward in coming to the Supper that was provided them. The Virgin Soul that is diſintangled from the Bands of Sin, and the Charms of a bewitching World, comes unſpotted to this Holy Feaſt of her Lord's preparing. I have eſpous'd you to one Husband, ſays the Apoſtle: Our Souls muſt be chaſt

from

from all ſpiritual Whoredom, that God may eſpouſe them to himſelf. They who in the Parable of the Supper, were taken up in viſiting their new Purchaſes, refus'd the kind Invitation: And thoſe who were enamour'd with the pleaſures of a ſenſual Life; have no breathings after this Heavenly repaſt. Deſire is that by which our Soul moves towards God: Where there is no inward warmth in our Affections, the Soul withdraws it ſelf from this entertainment that is full of Myſtery. A Soul that places all its happineſs in Earthly enjoyments, has no inclination to, or deſire for theſe Divine Comforts. When the young Man in the Goſpel heard, that to become a Diſciple of our Saviour, he muſt part with his darling Riches, he went away ſad, for he had great Poſſeſſions. Chriſt, our *Eliſha*, that came down from Heaven, pours not the coſtly Oyl of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, but into the Receptacles of thoſe Hearts that are entirely pure from the defilements of the World: The Love of God enters not our Souls till we have caſt off all love of the World and of our ſelves. Where our Treaſure is, there will our Hearts be alſo. If we account the World our greateſt Riches, our Thoughts will be continually hankering after it. Love has in it a uniting force: If the byaſs of thy Affections is ſet downwards, the Earth will unite and aſſimulate thee to

its own Nature. Love ſtrangely changes even our ſelves, and we grow very Worldlings and Muck-worms, if the things of this Life be the darling Objects of our Affections; but if we turn them upwards, and are in love with thoſe that are above, we ſhall ſoar aloft, and fix our hearts there where true Joys are only to be found. They who are intent upon their Yokes of Oxen and their Merchandize, turn their backs upon Chriſt the great Maſter of this Spiritual Feaſt. Men who are Slaves to their Intereſt, and the ways and means of growing Rich, are careleſs of thoſe true Riches that are treaſur'd up for them in the Heavens Earthly Poſſeſſions blind our deſires, under a falſe pretence, that they are ſufficient to ſatisfy the utmoſt extent of all our Appetites, and all this only to draw them off from ſeeking that only ſufficiency that is in God, which is able to fill the moſt capacious Faculties of our Souls. All the Riches of this Life conſiſt but in Creatures, Silver and Gold, ſtately Palaces, pleaſant Fields, and in large Flocks: None of theſe are able fully to ſatisfy the Soul of Man, for that is of greater value than the whole Creation it ſelf, for whoſe uſe they were all made: And how unable theſe things are to ſatisfy the deſires of Man, Death will diſcover to us, when we ſhall be abandon'd and forſaken by theſe our fellow Creatures. 'Tis ſtrange we ſhould be ſo fond of things that ſet ſo looſe

upon

upon and have ſo little kindneſs for us. When *Adam* forſook the comfort he had in the Contemplation of his God, and ſought to enlarge his delight by the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, he was turn'd out of Paradiſe: And if our Souls recline their Affections from God to ſettle them upon his Creatures, they are deſervedly robb'd of the Divine Comfort, and expell'd for ever from the Tree of Life. What then is there left for thoſe who ſlight this Heavenly Banquet of their Souls? The World paſſes away, and they themſelves that were ſo fond of it: Their Poſſeſſions are tranſient and fleeting, and no leſs ſo, are all that place their truſt and confidence in ſuch unſtable Enjoyments. God has ſworn by his Holineſs, that they who prefer the ſeveral cares of this Life, before the ſweet comforts of this Spiritual Repaſt of their Souls, ſhall not taſt of his Supper.

They who were unwilling to obey that loving Invitation of their Saviour, *Come unto me all ye that travel and are heavy laden*; ſhall one day here him with this dreadful Command in his Mouth, *Go ye curſed into Everlaſting Fire.* The Inhabitants of *Sodom*, when they rejected the Invitation of *Lot*, that Preacher of Righteouſneſs, were conſum'd from Heaven; and the fire of the Divine Wrath of God, that will burn for

ever, ſhall conſume the Obſtinate deſpiſers of this Divine Feaſt, who hold out againſt all the Invitations of his Goſpel. The fooliſh Virgins at the coming of the Bridegroom who wanted Oyl for their Lamps, delay'd till the Bridegroom enter'd, and the Gate was ſhut againſt them; and thoſe whoſe Hearts are not repleniſh'd with the Oyl of the Bleſſed Spirit, Chriſt will not admit them into his Joy; but the Gate of his Indulgence, Mercy, Comfort, Hope, Grace, and all good works ſhall be eternally ſhut againſt them. Beſides the loud call of the Goſpel, there is an inward call to our Souls, happy that Man who is obedient to it! Chriſt often knocks at the door of our Hearts with Holy deſires, Devout breathings, and Pious thoughts: Happy he who opens to him when he thus knocks for entrance. When firſt thou perceiv'ſt any holy deſires of Divine Grace riſing in thy Heart, be aſſur'd that Chriſt ſtands without waiting for admiſſion; riſe and let him in, leaſt he paſs by thee, and for ever after ſhut the door of his Mercy againſt thee. As ſoon as thou perceiveſt the leaſt ſpark of Pious Thoughts kindled in thy Heart, know that it was lighted by the fire of God's Love, his Bleſſed Spirit, cheriſh and feed this flame, that it may break out into the fire of love towards him; beware, leaſt thou extinguiſh the

the motions of his Spirit, and fruſtrate thoſe deſigns God is working for thy Salvation. A ſevere Sentence hangs over that Mans head, who deſtroys the Temple of God: Our Hearts are the Temples in which he delights to dwell; he pulls it down who denies the Spirit of God calling to him inwardly by his word, to take up his dwelling there. The Prophets of old heard the voice of God ſpeaking in their Hearts: And now under the Goſpel, all the truly Pious, feel the inward motions and powerful drawings of the Bleſſed Spirit: O Bleſſed are all they that hear and follow him.

The Prayer.

BLeſſed be thy Name, O Lord, for all the Divine Comforts of thy Grace and Spirit, increaſe them ſtill more and more upon my Soul, and let them bring forth the plentiful fruits of a Holy Life. Teach me to value theſe inward Comforts, above all the periſhing delights of this World; and while I have ſo delicious a repaſt to feed on as thy Bleſſed Spirit in my own Breaſt, let me not long after Huſks with Swine. Purge out all the droſs of my Earthly deſires, and draw my Affections up to Heaven and Heavenly Objects, that the ſweet reliſh of that Bliſs above, may give me a diſguſt

and loathing to all the nauſeous Pleaſures here below. And having once taſted how ſweet and Gracious the Lord is, let me never vitiate nor diſguſt my Palate with the bitter Gall and draughts of Sin. O God, do thou make clean my heart within me, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XVII.

Of the Benefits of Baptiſm.

Mark XVI. 16.

He that Believeth and is Baptized, ſhall be ſaved.

CALL to mind, O my Soul, the exceeding Love of God held forth to thee in thy Baptiſm, when thou waſt waſh'd in the laver of Regeneration, when thou wert born again, and becam'ſt no longer under all the Corruptions of thy firſt and natural Birth; but wert born of God through Water and the Spirit, and becam'ſt the Son of God, and becauſe his Son, therefore alſo an Heir of Eternal Life. As the Eternal Father at the Baptiſm of his own Son, ſent a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, *This is my Beloved*

Beloved in whom I am well pleaſed; ſo all that Believe in him and are Baptized, are his Sons by the Mercy of his Adoption. As at Chriſt's Baptiſm the Holy Ghoſt appear'd upon him in the ſhape of a Dove, ſo is he preſent at ours, and gives it all its ſaving efficacy, nay, conveys himſelf into them that believe, and raiſes up new motions in their Souls, that they may be as Wiſe as Serpents and as Harmleſs as Doves. As in the Creation of the World, the Spirit of God ſat brooding over the face of the Waters, and gave them a vital Energy: So is the ſame Spirit preſent in the Water of our Baptiſm, and makes it the ſaving means of our Spiritual Regeneration. Our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, who was the anointed of God, condeſcended to be Baptiz'd, to aſſure us that we are made Members of him by Baptiſm: He it is who is our Spiritual Head, and whatever was applied to him is communicated to us who are Myſtical Members of his Body; from him we derive all the ſaving efficacy of our Baptiſm, and the healing vertues of it upon our Souls Under the Law God enter'd into Covenant with his People by Circumciſion; but now under the Goſpel we are admitted into Covenant with him by our Baptiſm, for Baptiſm came in the room of Circumciſion: He then that is enter'd into this Baptiſmal Covenant with

God, has no reaſon to fear the Devils accuſation. Chriſt was cloath'd at his Baptiſm, hence the Saints are ſaid to have waſh'd their Robes and made them White in the Blood of the Lamb. The perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is this Beautious Robe, with which whoſoever is cloath'd, has no reaſon to fear the Spots of Original Sin. There was at *Jeruſalem* a Pool near the Sheep-market, into which an Angel went down at a certain Seaſon and troubled the Water, whoſoever then firſt after the troubling of the Water ſtepp'd in, was made whole of whatſoever Diſeaſe he had. The Water of Baptiſm has this healing vertue in it, when the Bleſſed Spirit deſcends and waſhes us with the Blood of Chriſt, that great victim that was offer'd up for us; as the victim Lamb was firſt waſh'd in the Waters of *Bethſaida*. At his Baptiſm the Heavens were open'd: And at ours an entrance into his Church through which we muſt paſs into his heavenly Kingdom. All the Three Perſons of the ever Bleſſed Trinity were preſent at his Baptiſm, and are even ſo at ours; for in the word of promiſe, which is annex'd to the Element of Water, Faith receives the Grace of the Father who adopts us, the Merit of the Son who cleanſes us, and the efficacy of the Holy Ghoſt who makes us new Creatures. *Pharoah* and all his Hoſt

Periſh'd

Periſh'd in the Red Sea, while the *Iſraelites* paſs'd through ſafe as on dry Ground. 'Tis thus in our Spiritual Baptiſm, all the dreadful Hoſt of our Sins are buried in that Water, and the truly faithful paſs ſafely to the promiſs'd Inheritance. Baptiſm is that Sea of Glaſs, which St. *John* ſaw in his Revelations, for the Brightneſs of the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhines tranſparently into our Souls. There was a Sea before the Throne of the Lamb, which Throne is his Church, in which alone the ſanctifying Graces of Baptiſm are to be found. The Prophet *Ezekiel* ſaw Waters guſhing out of the Temple, which gave Life and Health to all that were waſh'd in them: Thus in God's Spiritual Temple, which is his Church, the ſaving Waters of Baptiſm are ſtill iſſuing out with the healing ſtreams of his Grace, into the depths of which, our Sins are Plung'd, and all things ſhall live and be heal'd to which theſe ſtreams deſcend. Baptiſm is that Spiritual deluge of God's Mercy, in which all our Carnal Inclinations to Sin are drown'd. The unclean Bird of Prey quits his Habitation, and the Dove, the Bleſſed Spirit, flies to us with an Olive Branch in her Mouth, and Breaths into our Souls Peace and Tranquility of Mind. Do thou therefore, O my Soul, call to mind the exceeding Love of God ſhown thee at thy Baptiſm, and return

the

the deserv'd Praises of thy Heart. The more abundant the Grace of God has been, which was conferr'd upon thee at that time, the more careful should'st thou be, to preserve the gifts of it in thy Heart. We are buried with Christ by Baptism into Death, therefore as Christ was raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also shou'd walk in newness of Life: We are made whole; let us Sin no more, least a worse thing happen unto us. We have put on Christ's Righteousness, the most precious Garment we can be Cloath'd with, let us not stain it with the defilement of our Sins; our old Man has been Crucified at our Baptism, let now the new Man be raised up in us. We are regenerated and renew'd in the Spirit of our Minds; let not our Carnal Nature reign over the Spirit we have obtain'd. Old things are past away, behold all things are become new; let not our Carnal Nature in which we were born into the World, be prevalent over the Spirit we receive at our new Birth. We are become the Sons of God by Spiritual Regeneration, O let our Lives be worthy of so good a Father. Our Bodies are become the Temples of the Holy Ghost; let us prepare an abode for him, that so great a Guest may delight to dwell with us: We are enter'd into Covenant with God; let us beware we revolt not

not from him, nor ſerve under the Wages of the Devil, and fall ſhort of thoſe bleſſings which by this Covenant are made over to us. O Holy and ever bleſſed Trinity, do thou work all theſe things in our Souls: Do thou who haſt given us ſuch exceeding Love in Baptiſm, grant we may ever perſevere in it to the end.

The Prayer.

I Yield thee hearty Thanks, moſt Merciful Father, that it hath pleas'd thee to regenerate me with thy Holy Spirit, and to receive me for thine own Child by Adoption, and to incorporate me into thy Holy Church. I moſt humbly beſeech thee to grant, that I being dead unto Sin, and living unto Righteouſneſs, and being buried with Chriſt in his Death, may Crucify the old Man, and utterly aboliſh the whole body of Sin, and that as I have been made partaker of the Death of thy Son, I may alſo partake of his Reſurrection, ſo that finally with the reſidue of thy Holy Church, I may be an Inheriter of thine Everlaſting Kingdom through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XVIII.

Of the ſaving Participation of the Body and Blood of Chriſt.

John VI. 55, 56.

For my Fleſh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.

He that eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

HE who eats my Fleſh, and drinks my Blood (ſays the holy Jeſus) ſhall live for ever. Great is the Goodneſs of our Saviour towards us, in that he not only took our Nature upon him, and carried it into the higheſt Heavens, but feeds us with his own Body and Blood to Eternal Life. O the ſweet Delights with which my Soul is fed! O that Divine Repaſt my Soul ſo impatiently longs for! O that Celeſtial Food, and Bread of Angels! tho' they ſo earneſtly deſire to look into this great Myſtery, yet he paſs'd their Nature by, when he took upon him the Seed of *Abraham*: More nearly allied is our Saviour to us, than to the Angels themſelves; by this we know the Love of God, becauſe he has given us of his Spirit, and not only of his Spirit, but of his Body and Blood; for thus does he, who was

was Truth it ſelf ſpeak of Euchariſtical Bread and Wine, *This is my Body*, *This is my Blood.* How can the Lord forget thoſe whom he has redeem'd, thoſe whom he has fed with his own Body and his own Blood? He who eateth the Fleſh, and drinketh the Blood of Chriſt, dwelleth in him, and Chriſt in him. I do not then ſo mightily admire, that the Hairs of our Heads are all numberd, that our Names are written in Heaven, or that we are in the Hands of the Lord, and carried in his Boſom, ſince we are ſpiritually fed with his Body and Blood. Great certainly muſt the value of our Souls be, which are fed with the ineſtimable Ranſom of our Redemption. Great muſt be the Honour of our Bodies, which are the Habitation of a Soul redeem'd and fed with Chriſt's Body; which are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and in which the moſt Sacred Trinity vouchſafes to dwell; 'Tis impoſſible they ſhould for ever remain in the Grave, who are nouriſh'd with the Body and Blood of our Lord. This is that Food that is big with Wonders, we feed on it in our Hearts, nor is there any Converſion of it into our Fleſh, but we are chang'd into the Nature of Chriſt by his Spirit. We hereby become the Members of Chriſt's Body, and by his Spirit we are enliven'd, by his Body and Blood we are nouriſh'd. This

is

is that Bread which came down from Heaven, of which whoſoever eateth ſhall not hunger for ever. This is the Bread of Love and Mercy, which whoſoever feeds on, ſhall taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is, and of his fullneſs ſhall receive Grace for Grace. This is the true Bread of Life, not only living, but enlivening Bread; if a Man eats of this, he ſhall live for ever; it not only came down from above, and is the Bread of Heaven, but it ſettles our Converſation there, and gives us a Place among thoſe Bleſſed Gueſts, that feaſt for ever at his Table; they who eat it in the Spirit, in order to their Salvation, ſhall become Spiritual, for they ſhall not die, but be rais'd up in the latter Day: They ſhall riſe, but not to Judgment; for he who thus eateth, cometh not into Judgment nor Condemnation, for *there is no Condemnation to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus*, but they ſhall be rais'd to Life Eternal. He who eateth the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drinketh his Blood, has Life in himſelf, and ſhall live through Chriſt. His Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed: Let us then feaſt our Souls with this Food of his, and not rely upon any Merits of our own; let us ſatisfie our Souls, not with any thing we can draw out of our own Stock, but from that unexhauſted

Store-

Store-houſe of our Lord's Alſufficiency. He it is who is the true Fountain of Life; he that drinketh of this Water ſhall never thirſt, but it ſhall become in him a Fountain of Water, ſpringing up unto Eternal Life: O all ye that thirſt, come unto theſe Waters, and ye that have no Money come, buy, eat and drink, freely without: Let all that thirſt come to this Fountain; and do thou, O my thirſty Soul, who art inwardly ſcorch'd, come and allay the heat of thy Sins; and if thou haſt nothing of thy own, no Merits whereon thou can'ſt rely, fly the faſter to this refreſhing Spring; when thou haſt no room for Confidence in thy ſelf, fly to the Merits of thy Saviour with the more ardent Paſſion. In this Feaſt is the Retirement of Chriſt and our Soul; let us not be affrighted from it by our Sins, nor preſume we may enter by any Merits of our own; For, alas! what have we in us, that can merit the leaſt Portion of the Divine Favour? They lay out their Money in that which is not Bread, and labour for that which ſatisfieth not, ſays the Prophet: All we can do, will not give us any full ſatisfaction in our ſelves; nor is the Divine Favour to be purchas'd with the utmoſt Merits we are able to pay down. Hear therefore, O my Soul, and eat that which is good, and thou ſhalt be delighted with Fatneſs:

neſs. Theſe Words are the Spirit, and the Life, the Cup which we bleſs is the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt, the Bread which we break is the Participation of our Lord's Body: We cleave unto the Lord, therefore are we one Spirit with him: We are united to him, not by the ſame common Nature only, but by the Participation of his Body and Blood. I don't therefore raiſe this Queſtion with the *Jews*, How can this Man give us his own Fleſh to eat? but rather cry out, After what a myſterious manner does our Lord feed us with his Fleſh, and give us his Blood to drink? I don't nicely enquire how he is able to do this, but admire his Mercy to my Soul in it; I don't pretend to ſearch into his Majeſty, but revere his Goodneſs: I believe him Preſent, but am wholly ignorant of the manner how: I am aſſur'd he communicates himſelf to my Soul, by the ſtricteſt Union to the moſt inward Faculties of it. We are Members of his Body: He dwells in us, and we in him. My Soul has a deſire to be ſwallow'd up in the contemplation of this unfathomable Myſtery, but is at a loſs for Words to utter or declare the Goodneſs that is in it; and altogether ſtruck dumb, at a nearer Proſpect of the exceſſive Love of our Lord, and the Glory of the Bleſſed.

The Prayer.

O Bleſſed Jeſus, my only Saviour, and moſt Merciful God, who in the Sacrament, of thy own Inſtitution, do'ſt give thy Body and Blood to be the Nouriſhment of my Soul, O may they preſerve my Body and Soul unto Everlaſting Life; when I eat thy Fleſh in Remembrance that thou didſt die for me, and feed on it in my Heart by Faith with Thankſgiving, and may thy Blood convey to my Soul all the Benefits of thy Paſſion, when I drink it in Remembrance that thy Blood was ſhed for me, and deſire to be, and am as thankful to thee for it, as the ineſtimable Bleſſings to my Soul deſerve I ſhou'd be. O never let me be guilty of ſo foul Ingratitude, as to forget what thou haſt done for my Soul; but grant that my whole Life may be one continued Act of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, by performing all my Holy Reſolutions I have ſo often and ſo ſolemnly made at thy Table. And as often as I ſhall again in obedience to thy Command, and under the Conduct of thy Grace renew this moſt ſolemn Act of thy Religion, grant I may ſo eat thy Fleſh and drink thy Blood, that my ſinful Body may be made clean by thy Body, and my Soul waſh'd through thy moſt precious Blood. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XIX.

Of the Myſtery of the Lord's Supper.

1 Pet. I. 12.

Which things the Angels deſire to look into.

IN the holy Supper of our Lord, we have a wonderful Myſtery propos'd to us, and deſerves our profoundeſt Reverence: 'Tis the Treaſure and grand Repoſitory of God's Love to Mankind. The Tree of Life, we all know, was planted by God in Paradiſe, whoſe Fruit would have preſerv'd our Firſt Parents, and all their Poſterity, in an Immortal Happineſs, for which God, at the ſame time, created the Soul with an Immortal Nature. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was alſo there; but, alas! what was deſign'd by God to ſave their Souls, and to give them a Life that ſhould be Eternal, and what was only to try how far they would obey him, became the unhappy occaſion of Death here, and of Damnation hereafter; while they, poor Wretches, obey'd the ſuggeſtions of the Tempter, and their own Deſires after a further Happineſs than that they already were poſſeſs'd of: So likewiſe, in this Sacrament, we have the Tree of Life ſet before us; that ſweet Tree,

whoſe

whoſe Leaves are Medicinal againſt the Infection of our Sins, and whoſe Fruit brings Salvation; of ſo ſweet a Reliſh, as to take away the bitterneſs of Afflictions, and the ſting of Death it ſelf. The *Iſraelites* were fed with *Manna*, that they might be nouriſh'd with Food from Heaven: In this Sacrament is the true Manna, which came down from thence, to give Life to the World; this is the Bread of Heaven, the Food of Angels, of which whoſoever eateth ſhall never hunger. The *Iſraelites* had the Ark of the Covenant, and the Mercy Seat, from which they often heard the Lord ſpeaking to them Face to Face: In this Sacrament is the true Ark, the moſt Sacred Body of our Saviour, in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge; in this Sacrament is the true Seat of Mercy in the Blood of Chriſt, which makes us accepted in the beloved; nor do we only hear him in the inward Comforts imparted to our Souls, but he dwells in us; he feeds us not only with heavenly Manna, but with himſelf. Here is the Gate of Heaven open'd to the due Receiver. Here is that Ladder let down from Heaven, upon which the Angels themſelves deſcend, to take a View of this ſo great a Myſtery. And is there any thing greater in Heaven, than he that fills it with his Immenſe Nature? Is there a cloſer Union

between

between God and Happineſs, than between our Fleſh which he has aſſum'd? Heaven indeed is the Habitation of the Great God; but in the Human Nature of our Bleſſed Lord, the Holy Ghoſt had taken up his abode. God is in Heaven, but in Chriſt dwells the fulneſs of the Divinity. This is that Great and undoubted Pledge he has given us of our Salvation: He had nothing greater to beſtow upon us; for what can be a greater Gift than that of himſelf? What ſo nearly united to him as the Nature of Man, which he has taken into Fellowſhip with the Godhead, and made the Repoſitory of the Divine Bleſſings? What ſo nearly united as Fleſh and Blood? With this Food of Heaven he refreſhes the Souls of us his poor Creatures, who are but as Worms of the Earth, and makes us Partakers of his own Nature; How then ſhall we fail of a ſhare in his Divine Love? Who ever hated his own Fleſh? How then ſhall our Lord caſt us off, whom he feeds with his own Body and Blood? How ſhall he forget us, who has given us the Earneſt of his own Fleſh? How ſhall the great Tempter be ever able to undermine us, when we are ſuſtain'd by the Efficacy of this heavenly Food in our Hearts, that we faint not in the Day of Battle, under the ſevereſt Trials? Precious are we in the ſight of our Redeemer,

deemer, whom he has ſo dearly bought, and whom he ſo dearly feeds, as being his own Fleſh, and Members of his own Body. This is the only Sovereign Remedy, for all the Diſeaſes of our Souls; for what Sin is there of ſo deap a dye, that the Fleſh of the Son of God ſhall not be able to attone for? What Sin of ſo infectious and malignant a Nature, that his Body ſhall not be able to heal? What Sin ſo deadly, the Sting of which ſhall not be taken away by the Death and Paſſion of the Son of God dying for us? What ſo fiery Darts of the Wicked One, that ſhall not be quench'd in in this Fountain of the Divine Love? What Conſcience is ſo polluted, which his Blood is not able to purifie? God went before the *Iſraelites* in a Cloud and Pillar of Fire; but in this Sacrament, there is no Cloud to obſcure the Brightneſs of the Son of Righteouſneſs from ſhining into our Souls: Here is no Fire of the Divine Wrath, but we are paſſionately warm'd with the Ardency of his Love towards us; nor does he withdraw himſelf from us, but makes his abode with us. The pleaſantneſs of Paradiſe was the charming Type of Happineſs, into which our Firſt Parents were plac'd by God, to try what grateful returns of Obedience his Love would draw from them. Behold here's more than the Pleaſures of

Paradiſe

Paradiſe in this holy Sacrament: Man is fed with the Fleſh of his Creator, the repenting Conſcience is waſh'd in the Blood of the Son of God, the Members of Chriſt their Head are nouriſh'd with his Body, the believing Soul feaſts upon the Food of Angels, the Sacred Fleſh of God, which in the Unity of the Divine Nature, the Angels Worſhip, and to which the Arch-Angels pay the profoundeſt Reverence, and at which the Powers tremble, and Principalities ſtand aſtoniſh'd, this is become the ſpiritual Nouriſhment of our Souls. Let the Heavens rejoice, and let the Earth be glad; but do thou, O my Soul, break forth into exceſſive joy, for whoſe ſake God ſo freely laid out himſelf, and beſtow'd ſuch unſpeakable Riches of his Mercy.

The Prayer.

O LORD, who haſt ordain'd Myſteries in our Holy Religion to exerciſe our Faith, and raiſe our profoundeſt Adorations to thy Divine Majeſty, not to encourage a bold Preſumption in us to ſearch into the depths of thy Incomprehenſible Nature, give me, I beſeech thee, ſuch Holy Conceptions of thy Preſence in the Bleſſed Sacrament, as not to doubt but all the Benefits of it ſhall be as fully communicated to my

my Soul, as tho' thou wer't Corporeally there. Thy Spiritual Preſence in the Elements of Bread and Wine, by the Influences of thy Spirit, and by the application of thy Merits to the Soul of the truly Penitent, ſhall be ſufficient for me to adore thy Love, to revere thy Sacrament, and come to thy Table, O Bleſſed Jeſu, begging the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace, and a happy Communion between thee and my Soul. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XX.

Of a Serious Preparation before the Sacrament.

1 *Cor.* XI. 28.

Let a Man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.

WE are going to no ordinary Banquet, nor to the Entertainment of an earthly Prince; but to feed our Souls with the moſt Sacred Myſtery of the Body and Blood of our Redeemer. It is requir'd therefore from us, that we ſhould come with a Preparation worthy of ſuch a Divine Feaſt, leaſt inſtead of Life we meet with Death, and inſtead of Mercy we receive

Judgment. How did *Abraham* tremble, how did that Holy Patriarch fear, who is recorded for the Courage his Faith inſpir'd him with, when the Son of God appear'd to him in the form of Man, and declar'd his Intention to deſtroy *Sodom?* The Lamb of God, our great Sacrifice, is not to be ſeen with our bodily Eyes, but to be taſted and fed upon by the inward Affections of our Souls. When *Uzzias* raſhly approach'd the Ark, he was immediately ſtruck with a Leproſie from God: What wonder is it then, if that Man eats and drinks Damnation to himſelf, who eats of this Bread, and drinks of this Wine unworthily. The Ark of old was but a Type of this true Ark of the New Covenant made with Man in Chriſt. The Apoſtle has briefly taught us how we ſhould truly prepare our ſelves: Let a Man, ſays he, firſt examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup. Now as all holy Examination of our ſelves, muſt be regulated by the Divine Rule of the holy Scriptures, ſo by the ſame Reaſon muſt this which St. *Paul* requires from us. Let us then begin with the Conſideration of our own Weakneſs and Infirmity: What is Man in himſelf but Duſt and Aſhes? we are born of the Earth, we live upon the Fruit of it, and in a ſhort time we ſhall return to our Primitive Conſtitution. What has

has Man to boaſt of, who is a Compound of Corruption, and muſt ſhortly be the Food of Worms? Man is born to Labour, not to Honour; he is born of Woman, and therefore paſſeth his Days in guilt, and is but of a ſhort continuance upon Earth; he lives in a continued Flux of Hopes and Fears; he is full of Miſery, and therefore overflows with Grief; and truly great is the Number of thoſe Sorrows with which his Soul as well as his Body is affected; he knows not how he came into the World, and is as ignorant when he ſhall leave it; like Flowers in the Sun we retain our Beauty but for a while, and the ſhort Life we lead, is drawn out with protracted Cares and Diſquietudes.

Let us again conſider with our ſelves, what worthleſs and inconſiderable Creatures we are, who, when compar'd with our great Creator, are but faint and dark Reſemblances of his Almighty Goodneſs, meer fleeting Dreams, full of our own vain Imaginations, and Nothingneſs it ſelf. This and ſuch is Man; but upon greater and more grievous Accounts, is he become unworthy; for by his Sins he has provok'd his Maker, who is naturally and eſſentially a juſt God, therefore both by his Nature and Eſſence is he diſpleas'd with ſinful Man; and what are we but Stubble before his conſuming Fire? How ſhall our Wickedneſs, our Iniquities,

which thou, O God, haſt ſet before thee, and our ſecret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance, how ſhall theſe ſtand when thou art angry? Our God is Infinite, and always like himſelf, of Infinite Juſtice and Infinite Anger, and if God be Great and Terrible in all his Works, ſo is he in his Wrath, his Juſtice and his Puniſhments. He who ſpar'd not his Son, will he ſpare the Work of his Hands? He who was ſo ſevere againſt his Holy One, ſhall he paſs the Sinner by unpuniſh'd? So odious is Sin in the ſight of God, that he puniſhes it in thoſe who are moſt dear to him, of which *Lucifer* the Arch-Angel is a ſtanding and never dying Example to us. And let not our Examination go no farther than our ſelves, but let us conſider this Sacramental Bread, as it is the Communion of the Body of Chriſt. Then ſhall we perceive this true Fountain of God's Love, this unexhauſted Source of all his Mercies, the Lord will not be regardleſs of us his Servants, whom he makes Partakers of himſelf; For who ever hated his own Fleſh? Theſe holy Myſteries ſhall work a Bleſſed Reformation on our Souls, and convey the Divine Graces into our Hearts, and change us into New Creatures; till at length we ſhall arrive at the Happineſs to come, be wholly conformable to God, and to him alone, be like him in his Holineſs, and ſee him

him as he is. What is here held out to us in Faith and Myſtery, we ſhall actually enjoy, and have openly reveal'd to us in the cleareſt Light. Theſe Bodies of ours, ſhall be admitted to the Honour of ſeeing God Face to Face, which are now the Temples of the holy Ghoſt, and are ſanctified and enliven'd by the Body and Blood of Chriſt dwelling in us. This is the moſt ſacred Remedy againſt all the ghaſtly Wounds of our Sins; that is that Fleſh that giveth Life, and is more powerful with God to acquit us than the Sins of the whole World are to condemn us: This is the Sacred Seal of the Divine Promiſes, which we may produce in our behalf, before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt. Having this Pledge made over to us, we do with an humble Confidence glory in our Security of an Eternal Happineſs. If the Body and Blood of our Saviour is given to us for the maintenance of our Spiritual Life, much more are all our other Bleſſings derived down to us, by the Merits of the ſame moſt Holy and Propitious Sacrifice. How ſhall he who has given us the greater Bleſſings of our Souls, deny us the moſt leſſer Bleſſings of our Lives? He who has given us his own Son, how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things. Let then my Soul be exceeding joyful, for ſhe ſhall e'er long be call'd into the Marriage of the Lamb.

Let her clothe her ſelf in her richeſt Apparel; let her put on her wedding Garment, that ſhe appear not there naked: That Garment is the Righteouſneſs of her Lord, with which ſhe was adorn'd at Baptiſm. So far is our Righteouſneſs from being a Garment fit to appear in, at thoſe holy Nuptials, that it is defil'd and abominable. Let us be afraid then to bring along with us to this Solemnity of our Souls Wedding, any Garments of our own Merits, in which we may place any Truſt or Confidence; but let him cover our Nakedneſs, that we may be found acceptable Gueſts in his ſight.

The Prayer.

O LORD, look down in Pity upon me thy unworthy Servant, and tho' I can never of my ſelf, but through the Merits of my Saviour, be worthy of the Benefits of his Paſſion, yet pity my Infirmities, caſt the vail of thy Mercy over my Imperfections and reject me not from thy Table. I am enquiring into my Sins, and ſearching into the Receſſes of my Heart, to find wherein I have offended thee, and upon the Examination of my Soul, I find ſuch an Unworthineſs as affrights me; my Garments are ſo polluted with Sin, that they can never be fit to appear in thy Preſence, or to ſit down at

at thy Table; but, O Lord, let my Penitential Tears waſh away the Defilements of them, and let thy Blood make them as white as Snow. I will not preſume to come to this thy Table truſting in my own Righteouſneſs, but in thy Manifold and Great Mercies. I am not worthy ſo much as to gather up the Crumbs under thy Table; but thou art the ſame Lord, whoſe Property is always to have Mercy; Have Mercy therefore upon me, O Lord, and accept my Repentance, accept me for thy Mercies ſake, and ſo prepare my Soul here, for the Spiritual Reception of thy Body and Blood, that it may be prepar'd to live with thee hereafter in thy Glorious and Everlaſting Kingdom. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXI.

Of Chriſt's Aſcenſion.

Pſalm LXVIII. 18.

Thou haſt Aſcended on High, thou haſt led Captivity Captive, thou haſt received gifts for Men.

MEditate, O Faithful Soul, upon the Aſcenſion of thy Lord, who withdrew himſelf from the ſight of the truly Faithful, that he might become the Object of their Faith; for bleſſed are they who

have not ſeen him, and yet believe: Where our Treaſure is, there let our Hearts be alſo. Chriſt, our greateſt Treaſure, is aſcended into Heaven, and ſitteth at the Right Hand of God, let therefore our Hearts be enamour'd, and our Thoughts be fix'd upon thoſe things that are above. The Faithful Soul, like a Bride, with ardent Longings, impatiently wiſhes for the return of her Bridegroom, and is foreſtalling in her Thoughts that bleſſed Hour, when ſhe ſhall be led into the Marriage of the Lamb. Let her place all her confidence in that Earneſt of the Spirit which her Lord, when he came down on Earth, has left with her; all her truſt in the Merits of his Sacrifice, which ſhe humbly receives in the great Myſtery of his Supper; and let her ſhew this to be her Faith, that our Bodies fill'd with this uncorruptible Bread ſhall one day riſe again. What we can now only ſee with the Eye of Faith, ſhall then become viſible, when all our Hopes ſhall be ſwallow'd up in Fruition. Our Bleſſed Saviour, who is preſent to us in the Sacrament, while we are but Travellers through the Vail of this Life, under the Species of Bread and Wine, when we come into his Father's Kingdom, whither he our forerunner is gone in before, him ſhall we then perfectly know, and ſee him as he is. He choſe from the Mount of *Olives* to make his

his glorious Aſcent, the Branches of which are the joyful Emblems of Peace and Triumph, and this was a fit Place for him to aſcend from, who by his Paſſion has procur'd Peace to all troubled and diſquiet Conſciences, and is himſelf receiv'd into Heaven with the utmoſt and moſt Triumphant ſhouts of the Hoſt who attend about his Father's Throne. Theſe Tranſactions on the Mount, invite and call upon us to lift up our Thoughts, our very Souls, to thoſe more exalted Meditations of the Happineſs of Heaven: Where we can't follow him with the Feet of our Bodies, let us follow him with the holy Deſires of our Souls. O how pleaſant are the Mountains! 'twas on one of theſe *Moſes* went up and convers'd with God, here did our Fathers Worſhip, and *Abraham* choſe the hilly Country, while Lot dwelt upon the Plain: O may my Soul forſake the low and groveling Pleaſures of this World, and ſoar with devout Affections to things in a higher Sphere; ſo ſhall ſhe Feel the inward Raptures of a Divine Converſation, ſo ſhall ſhe be able to Worſhip her God in Spirit, and put up her Prayers to him through his Aſſiſtance; ſo with *Abraham* ſhall ſhe avoid the Eternal turnings with which this lower World ſhall be conſum'd. *Bethany*, where this was done, ſignifies a Village of Humility and Affliction,

through which there is a Paſſage open'd for us into Heaven, as our Saviour himſelf, through the ſevereſt Tryals, has already enter'd into his Eternal Joy. Hitherto the Gates of Heaven were ſhut againſt us, and the Paradiſe that is above, was guarded with a flaming Sword; but now has our Triumphant Lord thrown them open, and led us the Way to the Enjoyment of that Country, from which, by our Tranſgreſſion, we were faln. When he aſcended, his Diſciples ſtood gazing after him, with their Eyes towards Heaven; and thus ſhould the true Diſciples of this their Lord, raiſe all the Faculties of their Souls, to a Contemplation of thoſe things that are above. O Bleſſed Jeſu, what a Glorious Scene follow'd thy Paſſion! How happy and ſuddain an Alteration was here! In what a ſad and deplorable Condition did I behold thee under all thy Sufferings upon Mount *Calvary*, and how glorious doſt thou now appear upon the Mount of *Olives?* There thou trod'ſt the Wine-preſs all alone, here thou waſt attended with many Thouſands of bleſſed Angels; there thou waſt lifted up to thy Croſs, here thou art taken up on a bright ſhining Cloud; there thou waſt Crucified between Thieves, here thou art fill'd with exceſſive Joy amidſt the Choir of Angels; there thou waſt faſtned with Nails and condemn'd to Death, here thou

thou art free, and become the Great Deliverer of all that were condemn'd to Eteral Puniſhment; there thou waſt a dying and a ſuffering Saviour, here thou art become a joyful and triumphant Conqueror. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, O my Soul, at the Aſcenſion of thy Head: The Glory with which he is honour'd, reflects its Rays upon us who are his Members; where our Fleſh reigns, there let us believe is our Kingdom; where our Blood is aſcended with our Lord, there let us place all our hopes of future Glory, notwithſtanding our Sins would exclude us from it: His taking our Nature into his Godhead, hinders not this Participation of his Glory. Where he who is our Head is gone before us, there ſhall we who are Members of him, one day be united to him in our Perſons. Our Head has made his Entrance into the higheſt Heavens, we his Members have therefore the moſt reaſonable ground for our hopes that we ſhall follow after; not only of enjoying him here while we are in this Life, but of a full Poſſeſſion of him in Heaven. Chriſt came down from his Father to redeem us, he is aſcended up thither that he may one day glorifie us: He was born for our ſakes, and for our ſakes did he ſuffer upon the Croſs, and 'twas for the ſame good of us that he aſcended. By his Paſſion is our Love

ſtrength-

ſtrengthen'd; by his Reſurrection is our Faith eſtabliſh'd; and by his Aſcenſion are all our Hopes confirm'd. 'Tis our Duty to follow this our Bridegroom, not only with ardent deſires after him; but by good Works, which may ſhow the efficacy of our Faith. Nothing that is defil'd, ſhall enter into the holy City above, and upon this Account, the Angels that came from the heavenly *Jeruſalem* at his Aſcenſion, appears cloath'd in white Garments, as Tokens of their ſpotleſs Purity and Innocence. Our great Maſter of Humility, took not Pride along with him into Heaven; the great lover of Peace left all Diſcord and Contention behind him; nor did Luſt, or any of our inordinate Affections, aſcend with him who was the Son of a pure and ſpotleſs Virgin. Our Vices cannot follow after the Original of all Vertues, nor our Sins after that Juſt One, nor our Infirmities reach our Great Phyſician. He who deſires one Day to ſee God Face to Face, muſt live as always in his ſight: He who hopes to enjoy the Infinite Happineſs of a Heaven to come, muſt deſpiſe the preſent World, and all the allurements of it. O Holy Jeſu, do thou powerfully encline our Hearts, that we may aſcend after thee.

The

The Prayer.

O Moſt Glorious and Triumphant Jeſu, whoſe entry into Heaven, after thou hadſt conquer'd all the Powers of Darkneſs, did as far exceed the Pomp and Grandure of an earthly Triumph, as thy Divine Perſon did all the Princes and Conquerors of this World; Suffer me with an Eye of Faith to accompany thee into the higheſt Heavens, and behold the Glory wherewith thou art now honour'd at thy Father's Right-hand above. But, O Lord, I am not able to behold that inacceſſable Sight with which thou art cloath'd, my Faith is too weak to comprehend even the Bliſs which thou haſt prepar'd for thoſe that love thee; how much leſs can it conceive that Immenſity of Happineſs, and Glory in which thou livedſt from all Eternity, and doſt ſtill live in, with thy Father above. I muſt with thy Diſciples leave the ſight of thee, for my Eyes are not able to follow thee; but I will, like them, return from the Mount full of Faith and Hope. I can no longer doubt of thy Divine Miſſion, for God wou'd never have ſo highly rewarded thee, and ſo viſibly have taken thee to himſelf, if thou hadſt not been a true Prophet and ſent by him. I will no longer doubt how

how my Duſt and Aſhes may aſcend to Heaven, ſince my Nature is already aſcended with thee, and thou art gone to prepare a Place for me. I will diſpel all thoſe Fears the weakneſs of my own Nature wou'd ſuggeſt to me, becauſe thou haſt the diſpoſal of all thoſe Graces which are neceſſary to make me attain eternal Happineſs. O give me Grace to conſider that my Treaſure is above, and raiſe my Affections from things below! Let me exalted with thee, look down with ſcorn upon all the falſe and tempting greatneſs of this World, Let my Thoughts be wholly taken up in contemplation of that Happineſs I hope one day to enjoy, that by making Heaven and the Pleaſures of it my daily Converſation, my Soul may be acquainted with thoſe tranſporting Joys which ſhall never have an End; that when, O Bleſſed Jeſu, thou ſhalt come in the ſame manner as thou waſt taken up into Heaven, to judge the World, I may perſonally go along with thee into thy Kingdom, and have my hopes ſwallow'd up in Fruition. *Amen.*

MEDI-

MEDITATION XXII.

Of the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt.

Acts II. 4.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.

OUR Lord, after his Aſcenſion into Heaven, and his Entrance into his Glory, ſent the Holy Ghoſt to his Diſciples on the Day of *Pentecoſt*. As when God deliver'd his Law on Mount *Sinai*, he himſelf came down and appear'd to *Moſes*; thus when the Goſpel was to be propagated over the whole World, the Holy Ghoſt himſelf deſcended upon the Apoſtles, who were to be ſent abroad to this great Work. At the delivery of the one, there was Thundering and Lightning, and the terrible Noiſe of the Trumpet, ſounding in the Ears of all the People, this was agreeable to thoſe Threats that were ſo ſolemnly denounced againſt the Diſobedience of the Law, and ſhow'd how deeply we had incurr'd the Divine Diſpleaſure: But in this, there is nothing heard but the gentle Sound of the breathing Influence of the Spirit in our Hearts, preaching the glad Tidings of the Goſpel, and raiſing our dejected Spirits. In the one the People were ſtruck with Trembling and Aſto-

Aſtoniſhment, becauſe Law worketh Wrath; but in this the People flock'd to hear the wonderful Myſteries of God, whereby through the Goſpel their Way to him was made plain before them. In the one the Great and Terrible God came down in Fire, the Fire of his Wrath and Fury, which ſhook the very Foundations of the Mountain and made it ſmoak; but in this Merciful Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, God the Holy Ghoſt deſcended indeed in Fire, but it was in the Fire of his great Compaſſion and Love towards us; wherefore the Houſe where the Apoſtles were met, was not ſhaken with the Anger of God, but was rather fill'd with the Glory in which his Bleſſed Spirit appear'd. Why ſhould it ſeem a thing ſtrange to us, that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be ſent down from the Court above, upon ſo bleſſed a Meſſage as the Sanctification of our Souls, when the Son of God himſelf was ſent by his Father to free us from our Sins? Chriſt's Paſſion had loſt its deſign'd Efficacy upon the World, had it not been declar'd by the ſpreading of his Goſpel; for what Vertue would the Riches of his Mercy have had, had they not been reveal'd to us? Our Merciful God did not only deſign us the Benefits of his Son's Sufferings, but would have them univerſally declar'd by the Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt. Our Faithful God

ſends

ſends both his Son, and his Bleſſed Spirit to us in our diſtreſs, with all the Compaſſion of a Tender Father that would withhold nothing from us, whereby he might declare how dilated the Bowels of his Mercy were towards us. When the Apoſtles were met together, and with one Heart perſiſting in the Faith of their departed Lord, were offering up their Prayers to him, then did the Holy Ghoſt deſcend upon them, he who is the Spirit of Prayer, whoſe Influences our Prayers draw down upon us, and who moves us to approach the Throne of Grace, to make known our Requeſts to him. And why do we aſcribe all theſe bleſſed Effects to him? 'Tis becauſe he ſo cloſely unites our Hearts to God in that Communion we have with him in all our Spiritual Duties, as he is that everlaſting Spirit, in whom the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father, make up the Unity of the Godhead; for there is a ſubſtantial and eſſential Love between the Father and the Son. This our Spiritual Relation to God, is the effect of our Faith, and Faith the Gift of his Spirit, which we prevail with him to beſtow upon us by our Prayers, and our Prayers become acceptable, when offer'd up in the Spirit, aſſiſting and inſpiring our Devotions. When Incenſe was offer'd up in the Temple of *Solomon*, the whole

Houſe

Houſe was fill'd with the Glory of the Lord; and if thou offer up the ſweet ſmelling Savour of thy Prayers to God, the Temple of thy Heart ſhall be fill'd with the Glory of the Bleſſed Spirit. Let us here ſtand a while and admire the Mercy and Favour of our God: The Son interceeds for us, The Father promiſes to hear and accept our Prayers through ſo powerful an Interceſſion, and the Bleſſed Spirit teaches us what Prayers to offer up from the Altar of our Hearts, and himſelf prays with us; The Angels are ready to do us all the kind Offices of their ſeveral Stations, and thus the Paſſages into the Court above are all open to the Acceſs of our Prayers. Our Merciful God gives us Affections to pray to him, when he beſtows the Influences of his Grace, and the Spirit of Prayer; he alſo renders our Prayers effectual, being always a God ready to hear us; and if he anſwers us not according to our own Wills, yet grants what he knows is much better for us, than we do for our ſelves. The Holy Ghoſt came down upon the Apoſtles, when they were met together in that mutual Love their Maſter had ſo often recommended to them, for this is the true Spirit of Love and Charity, and makes us of one Mind and one Heart one towards another, it joins us through Faith in an alliance with our Saviour,

Saviour, it unites God to us through Love, and makes us love our Neigbour as our ſelves. The Devil is the great Fomentor of all that unhappy Diſcord and Separation that there is between God and us, and cauſes all that Hatred, Contention, and Animoſity, which is to be found among Men; but this bleſſed Spirit, as by a miraculous over-ſhadowing, he united the Divine and Human Natures in the Perſon of our Saviour; ſo by the Effuſions of himſelf into our Hearts, he reconciles Man to God, and God to Man. As long as this bleſſed Spirit, by his Grace and Influence abides with us, ſo long is there a happy Union between God and our Souls; but no ſooner does Man by his Sins become Apoſtate to his Faith in Chriſt, and his Charity to his fellow Creature, and hereby does deſpite to the Spirit of God, but there follows a Separation, and this bleſſed Union between God and his Soul, ceaſes any longer to be continued to him. He who has the Spirit of God, hateth not his Brother; and the reaſon for this is, that this Spirit incorporates him into the Myſtical Body of Chriſt, of which all the truly Faithful are Members: Now, Who ever hated any of thoſe Members of which his Body is made up? Nay, where the Spirit of our Saviour governs his Actions, he will love even his bittereſt Enemies: For why?

'Tis

'Tis becauſe he that follows the Example of his Saviour, will have the ſame Spirit that was in him, who maketh the Sun equally to riſe upon the good and bad, and hateth nothing of all that he has made. He who is acted by this Divine Spirit, is ready to become ſerviceable to all, his good Offices are Univerſal to the utmoſt of his Power, and he ſpends himſelf in becoming uſeful to all that want or ſtand in need of his ready Charity, and all this he does in imitation of his Creator, who is the Fountain from whence all the Mercies and Favours deriv'd to Man, take their Riſe and Original: Now the inward Motions this bleſſed Spirit raiſes in the Soul of Man muſt, like himſelf, be ſpiritual. As the Soul is that which gives Life, Senſibility, and Motion to our Bodies, the ſame does the bleſſed Spirit to our Souls; it makes us ſpiritual, it fills our Minds with the ſweeteſt Pleaſures, and directs the whole Man in his Duty both towards God and towards his Neighbour. From Heaven came that ruſhing Wind, which was the Emblem of the Holy Ghoſt coming down upon the Apoſtles, for he was of the Divine Nature, to wit, of the ſame Eſſence with the Father and Son, from whom he proceeded from all Eternity: He influences all our Thoughts to the Contemplation of thoſe things that are in Heaven, and our Hearts

to

to ſeek the Things that are above: He has not yet this Bleſſed Spirit dwelling in him, who has an over Fondneſs for the things of this World, and whoſe Affections are wholly ſettled upon the Pleaſures of it. The Holy Ghoſt came down under the Myſterious Figure of a Blaſt of Wind, as being that Spirit who ſupplies our Souls with a lively Refreſhment under all our Afflictions, as the Life of the Body is ſupported by the Air we draw, by a conſtant Flux and Reflux of our Vital Breath; ſo as to our Souls, that better Part of us, we live by the refreſhing Breezes of the Divine Spirit. *The Wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou hearest the ſound thereof, but thou knoweſt not from whence it comes, nor whither it goes*; ſo is every one who is born of the Spirit. And very agreeable was this Wind, the Figure under which he choſe to deſcend, who by an Eternal Emanation of the Spirit in the Godhead proceeds both from the Father and the Son. This was a Ruſhing Wind, to ſhow us how powerfully and ſpeedily the Grace of this Spirit operates upon our Hearts: He influences the Pious Souls in which he dwells to every thing that is good, and ſo fortifies their Minds, as to become regardleſs of all the Threats of Tyrants, the Stratagems of Satan, and the hatred of the World. He is that Spirit,

who

who qualified the Apoſtles by the Gift of Tongues, to preach the Goſpel, and made their ſound go out into all the Earth; and by this means he took away the Confuſion of Languages, whereby the Pride and Raſhneſs of building the *Tower* of *Babel* was puniſh'd, and the Nations that were then diſpers'd having different Languages, were gather'd together again in one Faith, by the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt. Not without Reaſon did he appear in the Shape of fiery Tongues, by whom the Holy Men of God, being inſpir'd ſpoke, who ſpeaks, to us ſtill in the Apoſtles, and puts the Word of God into the Mouth of his Miniſters. For ſuch and ſo great Gifts be all Honour and Glory to this Bleſſed Spirit, with the Father and Son, throughout all Ages. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O GOD the Holy Ghoſt, thou who art the Third Perſon in the ever Bleſſed and moſt adorable Trinity, diſtinct from the Father and the Son, and eternally proceeding from them both, Have Mercy upon me a miſerable Sinner, ſanctify and renew my corrupt Nature, and reſtore it to its Primitive Perfection and Dignity. I do, O Bleſſed Spirit, out of a thorough ſenſe of my own Frailty and Weakneſs, and the con-

continual ſinful Effects of my Nature, find that I am not able of my ſelf to fulfil that Righteouſneſs which God requires from me; and how ſhall I be able to appear in Judgment, unleſs thou be my Guide, and Comforter? O Breathe into my Soul thoſe Graces by which I muſt be ſaved! for thou art the only Author of all internal Holineſs, thou art the Principle of all Spiritual Life. Fill me with thy Bleſſed Fruits, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, and Temperance, that I living in thy Spirit, may walk in it, till from theſe lower Meaſures of thy Grace, I ſhall arrive to that State of Happineſs where thou wilt in the largeſt manner communicate thy ſelf to my Soul, and have both my Body and Soul ſpiritualiz'd in the Enjoyment of thee, O Father, thee, O Son, and thee, O Holy Ghoſt, Three Perſons but one God bleſſed for ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXIII.

Of the Dignity of the Church.

Pſalm LXXXVII. 3.

Glorious things are ſpoken of thee, O City of God.

THink with thy ſelf, O devout Soul, how great an Inſtance of God's Love it was to thee, that he has call'd thee into the Fellowſhip of his Church. I have but one beloved, ſays the Bridegroom in the *Canticles*, truly but one, ſeeing there is but one Church the beloved of Chriſt, in which the true Faith and Doctine of himſelf is taught. The Spirit of Chriſt is not extended beyond the Members of this his Myſtical Body; he who has not the Seal of his Spirit upon him, is none of Chriſt's; and he that is none of his cannot be partaker of Eternal Life. All periſh'd in the Deluge but thoſe who were ſhut up in the Ark of *Noah*; and thoſe who are not within the Pale of Chriſt's Church, we muſt leave to the alone and extraordinary Mercy of God, for they cannot be ſav'd by the Terms of his Goſpel. He ſhall not find God a Father to him in Heaven, who is not obedient to the Doctrines of his Church, as a Dutiful Son to this his Indulgent Mother. Think, O Devout Soul, how many

many Millions every day go down to Hell, who are groſs Idolaters, and were never admitted into the Boſom of Chriſt's Church. 'Twas not thy Nature, but the alone Favour of God, that he had to thee, which made this diſtinction between thee and thoſe poor Wretches. When the Land of *Egypt* was overſpread with thick Darkneſs, a darkneſs that might be felt; there was light ſhining only in the Houſes of the Children of *Iſrael*: Thus is the light of Divine Knowledge only in the Church of Chriſt. Thoſe who are out of the Pale of this Church, from the darkneſs of Ignorance in this Life, paſs down to the darkneſs of Eternal Damnation in the next. He who is not a Member of the Church Militant here on Earth; ſhall never be admitted into the Glories of the Church Triumphant above; for theſe are all united by the cloſeſt dependance upon one another, God, the Word; Faith, Chriſt, the Church, and Eternal Life. The Holy Church of God is a fruitful Mother, that every day brings forth Spiritual Sons; ſhe is an unſpotted Virgin, who keeps her ſelf pure and entire from the embraces of the Devil, and the defilements of the World; ſhe is the Spouſe of Chriſt, whom he eſpous'd to himſelf by an Everlaſting Contract, and has given her the Earneſt of his Spirit. The Church is that Veſſel, in which

Chriſt and his Diſciples are embark'd, and brings them at length ſafe to the Haven of Eternal Reſt; being guided by the rule of Faith ſhe ſteers clear off thoſe Rocks and Quickſands which lie diſpers'd up and down in her Paſſage through the Waves of this World, having God for her Pilate, the Angels for her Supporters, and the bleſſed Saints for her Paſſengers: She erects the Croſs of Chriſt for her Main-maſt, upon which hangs the Sails of Faith, which being fill'd with the Proſperous Gales of the bleſſed Spirit, ſhe arrives ſafely at the Haven of Eternal Reſt. The Church is that Vineyard of God's own Planting, which he has Water'd with his Blood, and fenc'd round with a guard of Angels to protect it, he has erected the Wine-preſs of his Paſſion in the midſt of it, and taken away every thing in it that may offend. This Church is that Woman in the Revelations cloath'd with the Sun? for ſhe has on her the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: She treadeth the Moon under her Feet, as deſpiſing this lower World and all the changes and inconſtancy to which 'tis ever liable. Conſider, O my Soul, the exceeding Honour with which God has honour'd his Church, and return God the Thanks that are juſtly due to him for all theſe things. Great are the advantages that are to be found in the Church of God, but they lie not in every

every ones way. 'Tis a Garden that is inclos'd, 'tis a Fountain that is ſeal'd up: No Man can ſee the Beauty of it, but he that is in it; nor are the Ineſtimable Benefits which are lodged in the Church acknowledg'd, but by him who has the happineſs to be admitted into it. This Spouſe of Chriſt, is to outward appearance overcaſt with a dark Cloud; but ſhe has an inward Beauty, for the King's Daughter is all glorious within. This Veſſel in which the Church is embark'd, is expos'd to, and daſh'd upon, by the frequent Storms and Tempeſts of Perſecution. This Vineyard, the more 'tis faſtned to its Standards, and the more 'tis prun'd by Perſecutions, the more it ſpreads and flouriſhes. The roaring Lyon who goes about ſeeking whom he may devour, bends all his efforts and deſigns to deſtroy and ruin this Beautiful Fabrick. The Church has all the Beauty of a Lilly, but it grows among Thorns: 'Tis as Beautiful as Paradiſe, and when the bluſtring Winds of Perſecution paſs over it, then like Spices it ſends forth its ſweeteſt ſmells. The Church is the Daughter of God; but being deſpis'd and ſlighted by the World, ſhe places all her hopes and expectations in the reverſion of that happineſs which ſhall hereafter be her Inheritance; upon this account ſhe is but upon her Journey towards her home,

and is contented to be uſed like a Stranger, is ſilent under all her Sufferings, and overcomes the Malice of her Enemies with undaunted Submiſſion. Like the Mother of our Saviour, ſhe weeps under his Croſs, and the heavier the load is under which ſhe bows, the more ſhe ſpreads her Branches. Think, O Devout Soul, how honourable the Church is, and do nothing that ſhall be unworthy of it. She is thy indulgent Mother, beware thou doſt not ſlight the Commands ſhe lays upon thee, refuſe not the Divine Nouriſhment of her Word and Sacraments. She is a Spotleſs Virgin, if therefore thou woud'ſt approve thy ſelf a Son worthy of her, keep thy ſelf from the embraces of the World, and do not Proſtitute thy Members to Uncleanneſs, nor commit a Spiritual Whoredom by thy Sins. She is the Spouſe of Chriſt, as is every Soul devoted to her Service; let her not turn an Apoſtate to her firſt Love, loſe not the earneſt of that Holy Spirit ſhe has ſo liberally beſtow'd upon thee. Thou art the Spouſe of Chriſt, let it be thy dayly Prayers that he wou'd haſten the coming of his Kingdom, and that thou may'ſt be admitted into the Marriage of the Lamb. The Bridegroom will come, in an hour we look not for him; let us be upon the watch, leaſt when he comes he finds us ſleeping, and the door be eternally

nally ſhut againſt us. Let the Oyl of Faith be always burning in our Lamp, leaſt when the Bridegroom comes, we ſhould in vain deſire to enter with him. Thou art a Paſſenger in this Veſſel, caſt not thy ſelf away in the Pleaſures of the World, before thou arriveſt at thy deſired Port: While the Waves run high and threaten thee with a Shipwrack, pray that thou may'ſt not be ſwallow'd up in the Tempeſts of Affliction, nor in the floods of Temptation. Thou art call'd into the Lord's Vineyard; do the work of a Faithful Servant while thou art in it, and let the thoughts of thy reward at night compenſate for all thy Pains. Thou art even as the Vineyard it ſelf; and thy whole Life is one continued ſeaſon for thee to prune and dreſs thy ſelf, and caſt away thy ſuperfluous Branches. Thou art a Shoot of Chriſt the true Vine; ſee that thou deriveſt all thy Life from him, and that thou prove exceeding fruitful of good Works; for the Maſter of the Vineyard will caſt away the uſeleſs and barren Branches of this Vine, and cheriſh the fruitful Succours, that they may become yet more fruitful. Thou haſt put on Chriſt through thy Faith, and thou art cloathed with this Sun of Righteouſneſs, ſee that thou deſpiſe the things of this World, which ſhine only with a borrow'd Luſtre, and make no com-

pariſon between them and the Eternal Bleſſings that attend thee in another Life. O Merciful Jeſu, thou who haſt lead us into the Church Militant, do thou alſo one day bring us into the Glories of the Church Triumphant.

The Prayer.

O Bleſſed Jeſu, who by thine own Blood has purchas'd to thy ſelf a Church here upon Earth, make me truly ſenſible of the honour thou haſt done me, in making me a Member of it, and admitting me by my Baptiſm into the Participation of all thoſe Bleſſings thou haſt beſtow'd upon it. Preſerve it, O Lord, by thy Mercy from all the attempts of thoſe who wou'd throw down its Fences, and lay waſte thine Heritage; Let not Prophaneſs and Irreligion, Error and Superſtition, overrun thy Holy Sanctuary; but do thou, O Lord, puniſh the bold Contemners of thy Spouſe, and vindicate her Cauſe againſt the Wicked that riſe up againſt her. O Preſerve the Honour of thy Church, carry her through all the difficulties of her Militant State here, and bring all thoſe who ſerve under her in thy Cauſe, to thoſe Triumphs of their Faith and Conſtancy, in which thou wilt appear at the Head of them, and lead them into thoſe

Rewards

Rewards of Happineſs, which thou haſt promiſed to the truly Faithful.

MEDITATION XXIV.

Of Predeſtination.

Ezek. XXXIII. 11.

As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and Live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O Houſe of Iſrael.

AS often, O my Soul, as thou woud'ſt Meditate on thy Predeſtination, look up to thy Saviour hanging upon the Croſs, dying for the Sins of a whole World, and riſing again for our Juſtification. Let thy Thoughts go back to the firſt entrance he made into the World when he lay an Infant in the Manger, and thus let them gradually proceed through all the Paſſages of his Life, and quiet all thy doubts in relation to any abſolute decrees of God againſt thy Salvation. God elected us to Happineſs before the Foundations of the World were lay'd; but in Chriſt is that Election made ſure to us: If therefore thou art in him, and be-

lieveſt him to be the Son of God, remove all the timorous ſcruples of thy Salvation; for to thee belongs all the bleſſed effects of God's Love, whom he has choſen and deſign'd for Happineſs. If by a firm reliance in thy Heart thou reſign'ſt thy ſelf wholly to the Obedience of Chriſt, doubt not but thou art one of thoſe whom he hath choſen. But if thou art for prying into the ſecret decrees of God's Will, and woud'ſt have them different from what he has reveal'd, thou wilt be loſt in an Abyſs of Thought, and 'tis to be greatly fear'd, thou wilt ſink thy ſelf down into the depths of Deſpair. Conſider God without a Saviour to pacify his Juſtice, or any Attonement to allay the Puniſhment that was juſtly due to a Sinful World, and he will appear under all the Terrours of an Angry God, he will be a Conſuming Fire: Come not too near him without a Saviour in thy hand, leaſt thou be Conſum'd. Without the ſatisfaction that was made by Chriſt, God, by the Words of his Law, which requir'd a perfect and abſolute Obedience, not only lays to their Charge, but Condemns all Mankind for the breach of the Conditions of it; beware then leaſt while thou art inquiſitive whither God has decreed thee to Miſery or Happineſs, thou drawſt down upon thee thy certain Damnation, by relying upon thy

Obedience

Obedience to the Law which thou can'ſt not but know is imperfect without a Saviour to ſupply the defects of thy imperfect Obedience. Thou muſt by no means inquire into the reaſons of God's Councils, leaſt thy own thoughts draw thee into unjuſt conceptions of them. God dwells in inexceſſible Light; do not thou too raſhly intrude thy ſelf into his Secrets, leaſt thou be ſtruck blind for thy preſuming boldneſs. Be content with that Light which he has reveal'd to thee in his Goſpel: In that thou may'ſt without danger inquire into the Doctrine of his Will concerning thee, and in this Light thou ſhalt ſee Light. Forbear to pry into the depths of his Eternal Decrees, and betake thy ſelf to that clear Manifeſtation of his Will, which he made in Chriſt, when the fulneſs of time was come; that juſtification of us from our Sins, gives us the cleareſt light into that Election with which he had choſen us from all Eternity. Acknowledge how juſtly the Wrath of God was due to thee for thy Sins; how unable the Law was to Screen thee from his Anger; and let this conſideration lead thee to Repentance. Acknowledge on the other hand, the Mercy of God exhibited to thee in the Goſpel for the Merits of thy Saviour; and apply it to thy Soul with a ſtrong confidence of its efficacy: Acknowledge the Nature of a true Faith,

and ſhow what that is able to do by the vertues of a Holy Converſation; Acknowledge what Chaſtiſement the Son underwent upon the Croſs from the hands of his Father, and bear thy own with Patience. Then with theſe Thoughts ſit down and begin to enter upon the Doctrine of God's Decrees concerning thee. This is the Method the Apoſtle leads us in, and in this let us follow him. The Mercy of God who firſt loved us, the Merit of Chriſt dying for us, and the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt inviting us in his Goſpel, are conſiderations that ought to carry us through all the Mazes of this great Myſtery. The Mercy of God is Univerſal without any Limitation, for the whole World was the Object of his Love; the Earth is fill'd with the loving kindneſs of our God; nay, Heaven and Earth are not able to contain it, 'tis as Infinite as God, for God is Love: He has declar'd to us in his Word, that he deſires not the Death of a Sinner; and if this be not enough for us, he has confirm'd it with an Oath; if the Promiſes of God have no credit with thee, thou wilt believe him ſure when he ſwears by his Holineſs he wou'd have thee ſav'd. He is Stil'd the Father of Mercies, 'tis his Property always to have Mercy and Pity; he finds enough in the Goodneſs of his own Nature to encline him to be Merciful: But Revenge and Judgments

is

is his ſtrange Work, inſomuch that Pity and Compaſſion flow Naturally from him, but Correction ſeems to proceed with ſome reſtraint upon his Nature. The Merit of Chriſt was of a Univerſal Influence, for he ſuffer'd, to attone for the Sins of a whole World. What cou'd then be a greater Inſtance of God's Mercy, than that he had a Love to us, before we had a Being; for it was all owing to his Love, that we were ever ſo much as made? And yet he lov'd us beyond all this, even when we were at enmity with him; for ſo high did he carry his Love towards us, that he gave us his Son for our Redeemer. To the Sinner bound over to Eternal Torments, and having nothing he could pay down, valuable enough for his Redemption; behold what the Father himſelf offers. Here, take, ſays he, my only begotten Son, and offer him up as a Sacrifice for thy ſelf: And the Son with a ready Submiſſion to the Divine Will of his Father, Crucify me, and pay down the price of thy Redemption. The Acceptance of this Sacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling Savour, was by no means partial, nor is any Man living ſhut out from the benefits of it; and that thou may'ſt entertain no doubts in thy Heart of its Univerſal efficacy, Chriſt, when he Suffer'd on the Croſs, pray'd to his Father, and ſhed his own Blood for thoſe who where then, in

the

the very Act, his Murtherers. Nor are the promiſes of the Goſpel leſs Univerſal, for that Invitation of our Saviour is unlimited: *Come unto me all ye that Labour and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh ye.* What was done for all without any Exception, is offer'd to all without any Reſtriction: As far as thy Faith ſhall carry thee into the Belief of all thoſe things thy Saviour has done for thee, ſo far ſhalt thou partake in the Merits of his Sufferings. God denies the Bleſſing of his Grace to none but thoſe who think themſelves unworthy of it. Conſider then, O my Soul, upon what ſure Foundations thy Election ſtands, and place a hearty truſt in the Mercy of thy God. Conſider how Merciful God has already been to thee, and thou canſt entertain no doubt of its laſting continuance. God made thee out of nothing, when thou waſt not; and when through the Fall of thy Firſt Parents thou wert Condemn'd, he Redeem'd thee; when thou wert out of his Church, he call'd thee into it; when thou wert Ignorant, he Inſtructed thee; when thou wert out of the way, he brought thee back again; when thou wert a Sinner, he Chaſtized thee; when thou ſtood'ſt upright, he ſtrengthen'd thee; when thou wert fallen, he rais'd thee up; when thou wert on thy Feet, he led the way before thee; when thou cam'ſt to him, he received thee: In

waiting

waiting ſo long for thee, he ſhow'd his long ſufferance and forbearance; and in pardoning thee, how eaſy he is to be intreated. The Mercy of thy God is beforehand with thee, have therefore no miſtruſt upon thee, but that it ſhall follow thee after thy Relapſes: His Mercy inclines him before thou Sinneſt, to make thee whole; 'twill alſo purſue thee that thou may'ſt be Glorified. He has ordain'd thee beforehand to a Holy Life by his Mercy, and the ſame Mercy deſigns thee to live with him hereafter. Why art thou not cruſh'd to pieces in thy Fall? Who but the Lord Suſtains thee? Put then thy Confidence for ever after in the Mercy of thy God; and have a ſtrong hope, that thou ſhalt one day arrive at the end of thy Faith, the Salvation of thy Precious and Immortal Soul. For in what hands canſt thou more ſafely lodge the hopes of thy Salvation, than in his, who has made Heaven and Earth, whoſe Hands are never ſhortned, whoſe Bowels are ever flowing with Mercy, and the Paſſages of it ever open? Conſider, O my Soul, that we are elected by God, that we might become holy and unblameable. They who take no delight in the Duties of a Holy Life, nor have any regard for Religion how they may pleaſe God; to them belong not the Bleſſing of Election. We are choſen in Chriſt, and 'tis our Faith in him

him that gives us a title to his Merits: We muſt ſhow our Faith by our Love of him, without which Chriſt will profit us nothing, nor is our Election ſure. This Foundation of the Love of God ſtands unſhaken, having this Seal of our Obedience annex'd to it; and yet let us not throw our ſelves wholly upon the alone Mercy and Love of God without our own endeavours, but let every one that Names the Name of Chriſt depart from evil. No Man ſhall be able to break into the Fold, or carry off any of the Sheep of Chriſt which his Father has given him: But then thoſe Sheep muſt be obedient to his Voice. We are the building of God; but we muſt perſevere in our Faith, and the Glorious Expectation of our Hopes, to the end of our Lives without wavering. O Lord, do thou who haſt given us a Will to pleaſe thee, give us alſo ſtrength to bring it to Perfection.

The Prayer.

O Infinite and Incomprehenſible Lord God, Infinite in thy Mercies, and Incomprehenſible in thy Nature; who doſt repreſent thy ſelf to Mankind under the moſt extenſive Character of Love and Mercy; thou that art Gracious, Merciful, ſlow to Anger, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth,

Truth, who deſireſt that no Man ſhou'd Periſh, but that all ſhould come to the knowledge of the Truth; let not the dread of any ſecret decree of thine, contrary to thy reveal'd Will, give me the leaſt diſturbance in my Mind; but as the Sacrifice of thy Son had Merit enough in it for the Sins of a whole World, ſo let me not doubt, but that I and all Mankind may partake of the Univerſal Merits of it, if we be not wanting to our ſelves, but comply with the merciful deſigns of his Grace: But let not this, O Lord, tempt me to an undue Security, nor ſwell me up in an imaginary conceit of being unalterably in thy Favour. I know my Sins and my Impenitence will deprive me of all the benefits of my Saviour's Paſſion; and therefore do I earneſtly beg the aſſiſtance of thy Grace in order to a true Repentance, and then I know thou wilt not caſt me off, but ſave my Soul for the ſake of thy Son, and my Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXV.
Of the ſaving Efficacy of Prayer.

Luke XI. 1.

Lord, teach us to Pray.

'TIS the great Condeſcention and Favour of God, that he requires we ſhou'd keep a Communion with him in our Devotions, and boldly make known our Requeſts to him in our Prayers: He gives us Grace to ask, and makes our Petitions effectual with himſelf, to obtain what we thus ask for: Great is the Force of Prayer, which being offer'd up on Earth, makes its way to Heaven, and brings down Bleſſings upon us from above. The Prayer of the Righteous Man unlocks the Treaſures of the Divine Goodneſs, it appears before God's Throne, and returns back into his Boſom laden with the Bleſſings of his Bounty. 'Tis the ſafe Defence, under which our Souls protect themſelves from the Temptations of our grand Adverſary. When *Moſes* ſtretch'd out his Hands, the *Amalekites* fell before the Children of *Iſrael*; nor ſhall the Devil have any power over thee, while in the ſame devout Poſture thou are imploring the Protection of thy God. The fierce-

fierceneſs of his Wrath is abated, and he is pleas'd to turn it away from us, by that holy Violence we uſe towards him in our Prayers. Our Saviour himſelf often pray'd to his Father, not for the ſupply of any thing he could want; but that by his own Example he might recommend to us a Duty ſo worthy of our Practice. By Prayer we acknowledge our Subjection to the great Governour of the World, who has commanded us to pay him daily this our Spiritual Tribute. By our Prayers we do as it were go out of our ſelves, and our Thoughts Mount upon the Wings of our Devotion, to God who is the Object of them. They are the ſureſt Armour of our Defence, and the Soul that lives conſtantly under the Guard of his Prayers, is ſafe againſt the Inſults of all the Powers of Darkneſs. Theſe are the Faithful Meſſengers we diſpatch to the Court above, and mediate for us with God to ſend us a ſupply of all we ſtand in need of; they never return empty, for God is always ready to hear us, and if he anſwers us not according to our own Wills, yet grants us what he knows is better for us, and always for our Good: We may undoubtedly hope either to receive what we pray for, or ſomething elſe that he knows will be more to our advantage. He has given us the moſt valuable Gift he had to beſtow,

beſtow even his own Son, and that before we ask'd, or could ever expect from his Hands: What will not he do for us when we pray to him? We cannot but be aſſur'd that God the Father is ready to hear us, and that God the Son interceeds for us. In any Circumſtance of thy Wants, thou may'ſt with *Moſes* enter into the Tabernacle, and conſult the Lord in thy Prayers, and thou ſhalt hear God readily anſwering thy requeſts. Whilſt our Saviour was offering up the pureſt Prayers that were ever utter'd by the Tongue of Man, he was tranſfigur'd in the Mount; nor is the Soul in the Ardour of her Devotion, without a mighty change wrought within; her Prayers fill her with an internal Light, which often leaves the Sinner, when he riſes off his Knees, in Tranſports of Joy, for the Pardon he has receiv'd, who was fill'd with a Deſpondency of Mind, before he had applied himſelf to the Mercy of God in his Prayers. With what Face canſt thou behold the Sun, before thou haſt pay'd thy Devotions to that God, who gives thee, the Brightneſs of its Light for thy Direction? How canſt thou enjoy the Bleſſings of thy Table, before thou haſt pay'd thy Thanks to that God, that has ſo bountifully ſpread it with the Comforts of Life? How canſt thou entruſt thy ſelf to the Darkneſs of the Night, before thou haſt guarded

guarded thy Bed about with thy Prayers? What Bleſſing canſt thou hope for, upon all that thou ſetteſt thine Hand unto, before thou haſt ask'd it of him, without whom all thy Labours will be to no purpoſe? Whatever Bleſſings thou deſireſt, whither they relate either to thy Soul or Body, ask them at the Hands of God, and thou ſhalt receive them: If Chriſt be the deſire of thy Soul, ſeek him, and thou ſhalt find him: If thou wouldſt have the Door of Divine Grace here, and the Gates that ſhall admit thee into everlaſting Happineſs hereafter, ſet open for thy entrance, knock with ardent Prayers, and they ſhall be open'd to thee: If, while thou art paſſing through the Wilderneſs of this World, thy conflict with Temptations cauſeth thee to thirſt, and thy Soul complains for want of Spiritual Bleſſings, betake thy ſelf, in thy Prayers, to Chriſt that Spiritual Rock, be earneſt and importunate with him in thy Prayers, and thou ſhalt perceive the Streams of Divine Grace flowing plentifully to allay thy thirſt, and ſupply all thy Wants: Wouldſt thou offer to God an acceptable Sacrifice, offer up thy Prayers, they ſhall be as a ſweet ſmelling ſavour in his Noſtrils, and his Anger ſhall ceaſe from thee: Wouldſt thou every Day converſe with thy God, let thy Prayers be thy greateſt delight, which keep up this Inter-

Intercourſe between God and every Devout Soul: Wouldſt thou taſte how ſweet the Lord is, invite him by thy Prayers to take up his abode with thee in thy Heart. He is a God that delights in Prayer, but 'tis when that Prayer is duly made to him; he therefore that deſires God ſhould hear him, muſt pray in the Spirit of Wiſdom, with Ardour and Fervency, with Conſtancy and Humility, with Faith and Perſeverance, and with a ſtrong Hope that he ſhall obtain what he thus prays for. Let the Spirit of Wiſdom be with him in his Prayers, that he may ask thoſe things that are for the Promotion of God's Honour, and the Benefit of his fellow Creature. God is an Almighty God; thou muſt not therefore in thy Prayers pretend to direct him, nor preſcribe to Wiſdom it ſelf, what order to obſerve in granting or withholding thoſe things thou pray'ſt for. Let not thy Prayers break raſhly from thee, but let them be offer'd up out of a Faithful Heart, and thy Faith will have an Eye to the ſure Word of promiſe: What God has abſolutely promis'd, thou may'ſt in as abſolute Terms make the Petition of thy Prayers; and what he has promis'd under certain Conditions of thy Obedience, as he has done all the Temporal Bleſſings of this Life, thou muſt only pray for under thoſe Conditions; but what God has by no means pro-

promis'd, thou muſt not by any means preſume to ask. God many times gives us in his Anger, what he denies us in Mercy; let thy Saviour then be the Pattern for thee to follow, who ſubmitted his own Will to that of his Father, with the higheſt Reſignation. Let there appear a viſible Ardour of thy Devotions; for is it reaſonable to expect, God ſhould hear thee, when thou doſt not ſo much as hear thy ſelf? Would'ſt thou have God regard thee, when thou art regardleſs of thy ſelf and thy own Prayers? When therefore thou wou'dſt pray, enter into thy Chamber, and ſhut thy Door: Thy Heart is that inward Room into which thou ſhouldſt retire; thou muſt ſhut all the Avenues of it, and keep out all Thoughts of the World, and the Concerns thereof, that they break not in, to diſturb the devout compoſure of thy Soul; they are the Affections of our Minds, not our Words, that encline God to hear us; our Minds ſhould be ſo rais'd by the Ardency of our Thoughts, that they ſhould far exceed all our Tongues can expreſs: And this is that true and ſpiritual Worſhip the Lord requires from us. When our Saviour pray'd to his Father in the Mount, he lift up his Eyes to Heaven; and in our approaches to him in our Prayers, we muſt turn away our Thoughts from all created Objects, and fix them only upon God;

God; 'tis an Affront to him, to pray that he would apply himſelf to us, and to our Wants, when our Application to him it ſelf is remiſs and careleſs. If the Spirit attends us in our Devotions, we ſhall be able to pray without ceaſing, and hold up unwearied Hands to the Father of all Mercy, that our Minds may be always kept waking, by thoſe holy Deſires our Souls have towards him. 'Tis not always neceſſary, that we ſhould pray with loud Cries and mournful Accents, for ſince God is preſent in the moſt inward Receſſes of the Pious Hearts, he hears our very Sighs; nor need we in our Prayers uſe many Words with him, for he is both within, and knows all our Thoughts, and the Cogitations of our Hearts; ſometimes one ſingle Groan, raiſed by the impulſe of the Holy Ghoſt, and offer'd up in the ſame Spirit, is more acceptable with God, than the tedious Repetitions of many Prayers, wherein the Tongue is employ'd, but the Heart is altogether ſilent. Let Humility likewiſe ſeaſon all our Piety, and place our greateſt Confidence in the Mercy of God, and not in any thing we can call meritorious in our ſelves; if we truſt in our own Worthineſs alone, our Prayers are condemn'd in the ſight of God, notwithſtanding the intenſeneſs of our Devotions, ſhou'd draw even Drops of Blood from

our

our very Hearts: There is no pleaſing God but in Chriſt, and therefore no Prayers are duly made but through him, and what he has merited for us: No Sacrifices were pleaſant in his ſight, but what were offer'd up on the Altar of the Tabernacle alone; nor is that Prayer pleaſing to him, which is not offer'd upon Chriſt, that Altar of Propitiation. God promis'd to hear the Prayers of the Children of *Iſrael*, when they turn'd their Faces toward *Jeruſalem*; and we muſt turn our Hearts towards him who is the Temple, in whom the Godhead dwells. Chriſt in that Agony of Prayer, which he was in, in the Garden, threw himſelf proſtrate on the Ground; See how that Holy Soul of his, humbles it ſelf in the Preſence of the Divine Majeſty! Let thy Prayers be offer'd up in Faith, and freely reſign thy ſelf into the Hands of God, to do with thee as he ſhall think fitting, whither it be thy Portion to want the good things of this Life, or patiently to undergo thoſe Sufferings Infinite Wiſdom has reſolv'd to exerciſe thee with. The ſooner we betake our ſelves to a Life of Devotion, the greater will our Advantage be; the oftner we are upon our Knees, the better it will be for us; and with how much the greater Fervency we perſue this Duty, the more acceptable it will be to God. Let us Perſevere in our

Prayers,

Prayers, and not be diſcourag'd, for God does not deny what he for a time withholds from us; but ſhows us the value of thoſe Gifts which are not to be obtain'd without our earneſt Importunities. What we have deſir'd from him by a long Expectation to receive, are procur'd at laſt with a greater Reliſh. Let a ſtrong Confidence, that we ſhall enjoy what we ask, ever attend our Faithful Prayers, not in the leaſt doubting either of the Mercy or Bounty of God to beſtow it upon us. And do thou, O God of Mercy, who haſt commanded us to pray unto thee, grant that all our Prayers may be according to thy Will.

The Prayer.

O Holy and Pure God, thou that heareſt Prayer, to whoſe Infinite Perfections and Glory, all the weak and imperfect Services of thy Creatures can make no addition, Look down with Pity upon the Infirmities of me thy humble Servant, and whenever I approach thy Majeſty, let the Aſſiſtance of thy Bleſſed Spirit, work in me ſuch devout Affections and Holy Diſpoſitions of Mind, that I may ever offer up to thee a moſt acceptable Sacrifice. Let my Confeſſions be attended with a hearty ſorrow for my Sins, and

and a ſhame that I ſhou'd thus have provok'd ſo good and merciful a God as thou haſt ever been to my Soul. And when I beg thy Mercy, let me be truly ſenſible how much I want it, and place an entire Confidence in thy Infinite Goodneſs, for my Pardon and Forgiveneſs. In all my Devotions do thou aſſiſt me; and when I pray to thee for any Temporal Bleſſings or Deliverance, let my Will be wholly reſign'd to thine, and let me always depend upon the Wiſdom of thy Providence, who know'ſt, O heavenly Father, what is better for me, than I do, or can ask for my ſelf. I have, and ſhall ever have abundance of Reaſon to praiſe thee, for I am daily ſurrounded by thy Mercies, let not my Tongue only ſpeak of all thy Goodneſs, and thy Praiſes be upon my Lips; but let me wholly give my ſelf up to thy Service, and my Life, led in Obedience to thy Will, be the moſt pleaſing Offering of my Praiſe. And whereas, O Lord, I find my Inclinations to Sin very ſtrong, and my evil Habits very many, let the conſtancy of my Prayers be a bleſſed Means to ſubdue them, that I preſerving a lively ſenſe of my Duty upon my Mind, and being fortified by thy Grace, which I earneſtly beg of thee, may be kept free and unhurt from thoſe Temptations which continually aſſault my Soul. And becauſe, O

Lord, I muſt be expos'd in this Vale of Miſery to many Croſſes and Calamities, let the frequent Communion with thee, my God, in my Prayers, raiſe me above this World, and ſanctifie to me all my Afflictions, that thus from leading a ſpiritual Life here, and from praying to thee to ſupply all my wants, I may at laſt come to enjoy thee for ever, and ſpend an Eternity in ſinging Praiſes and Hallelujahs to thee, and to the Lamb, World without End. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXVI.

Of our Guardian-Angels.

Pſalm XCI. 10, 11.

There ſhall no Evil befall thee, neither ſhall any Plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For he ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

THink, O my Soul, what a Mercy 'tis that God has appointed Angels to watch over thee. Our heavenly Father ſent his Son into the World to redeem us; the Son was himſelf incarnate, to ſave us; the Holy Ghoſt was ſent to ſanctifie us; and the

the Angels are Meſſengers from above, to guard and protect us. Thus does the Court of Heaven ſeem to employ it ſelf in the Service of Man, and brings down Bleſſings upon us from above. I no longer wonder, that the Creatures here below were made ſubſervient to the Uſe of Man, ſince the Angels themſelves, far more excellent than they, deny us not their kind Offices and Aſſiſtance. What, ſo ſtrange a Thing is it, that we ſhou'd be ſupplied by Heaven with Light to purſue the Toils and Labours of the Day, and with the Darkneſs of the Night to repoſe our wearied Spirits, when the very Inhabitants of the Celeſtial abodes are buſy about us for our good? What, ſo ſtrange a thing is it, that the Air ſhould feed us with the Breath of Life, and that the Fowls of it ſhou'd be in ſubjection to us, when the Angels, thoſe Immaterial Spirits, guard our Lives, and preſerve us from harm? That the Water ſhou'd afford us Drink, refreſh the thirſty Earth, and yield that wonderful variety of Fiſh for our Uſe; What is there in all this to be ſo much admir'd at, when Angels are at hand with Refreſhments, to allay the violence of Afflictions and Temptations with which our weary Souls are tir'd and fateagu'd. What wonder is it, that the Earth bears on its Surface, and feeds us with Bread and Wine,

and loads our Tables with the Fruits and Creatures of its production, when Angels are commiſſion'd to keep us in all our ways, to bear us up, that we daſh not our Foot againſt a Stone? Theſe Angels expreſs'd their greateſt Concern for the Saviour of the World, and were officiouſly buſy about all the Paſſages of his Life: 'Twas an Angel brought the Bleſſed News of his firſt Conception, uſher'd in his Birth, and declar'd it to the World: 'Twas an Angel brought the Divine Command to his Mother, to flee into *Egypt*; and Angels miniſtred to him in the Wilderneſs: 'Twas theſe that waited on him thro' the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, when he went up and down upon Earth preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, and ſtood by him in the laſt Agonies of Death: Angels appear'd as Witneſſes of his Reſurrection, and by thoſe, when he Aſcended to his Father, he was glòriouſly attended, and they are thoſe Angels who ſhall be preſent when he comes again to Judgment. As therefore in the days of his Fleſh he was ſerv'd by Angels, ſo are theſe Bleſſed Spirits concern'd for the good of all who by Faith are incorporated into Chriſt. After the ſame manner they were ſerviceable to him who was our Head, do they officiate about us who are Members of his Body: 'Tis a Pleaſure to them here on Earth, to attend readily

all

all thoſe, whom e'er long they ſhall have for their Companions in Heaven: Nor do they refuſe the kind Offices of theſe Happy Spirits, who hope one Day to be admitted into the Tranſports of that Joy which will be found in that Pure and Holy Converſation, in which they ſpend their Eternity. *Jacob*, as he was returning into his own Country, ſaw Angels in his Paſſage, who had pitch'd their Tents about him: Thus, while the truly Godly are travelling through the Vale of this Life, in their Paſſage to that Country of theirs which is above, they have Angels in their Company aſſign'd them by God, to preſerve them from the Dangers with which the Road they go is miſerably infeſted. *Daniel*'s Life was protected by Angels, even in the midſt of Lyons: And from the ſame Hands proceeds the Security of the Good, from the Deſigns of the Devouring and Infernal Lyon. Angels conducted *Lot* in ſafety from that conſuming Fire that laid *Sodom* and the neighbouring Country in Aſhes: And to their Protection, from the frequent Temptations of the Devil, do we owe our ſafety and eſcape from thoſe Infernal Flames, that would otherwiſe conſume us. The Soul of *Lazarus* was conducted by Angels into *Abraham*'s Boſom: And 'tis they that convey the Souls of God's Elect, into the Manſions that are aſſign'd

them in his Kingdom. 'Twas an Angel that knock'd off *Peter*'s Chains, and led him by the Hand out of Priſon: And 'tis their Guardian-Angel, that ſnatches the truly Pious from thoſe Dangers which were otherwiſe inevitably falling upon their Heads. The Devil indeed, our Adverſary, is a Spirit of great Power, and capable of doing us abundance of Miſchief; but the Guardianſhip of Angels raiſes and ſupports us under all the Efforts he makes upon our Souls. Nor doubt but that theſe are preſent with, and ready to aſſiſt thee in all the Dangers thou may'ſt meet with, for they are repreſented to us under the Figure of Cherubims and Seraphims, as being full of Wings, to ſhow thee the Activity and Swiftneſs of their Motion in bringing Aid to thee under any of thy Diſtreſſes. Doubt not their being with thee to protect thee in all Places, for they are pure Spirits without any thing that is Corporeal and Material belonging to them; but convey themſelves into all Places, nor is any thing able to keep them out, but they will ſtill, wherever thou art, be hovering over thy Head to protect thee: Queſtion not their knowledge of the Dangers thou art running thy ſelf into, and of the Afflictions under which thou laboureſt, for they always behold the Face of their heavenly Father, and are

ready

ready to execute his Commands which they receive from him. Reaſon with thy ſelf, O my Soul, upon the Nature of theſe happy Spirits, and conſider them as Holy Angels; if therefore thou ever hopeſt to enjoy their Company, prepare thy ſelf beforehand with ſuch a Holineſs as may render thee fit for ſuch a Bleſſed Converſation; if ever thou deſireſt to have their Guardianſhip over thee, encourage them to watch for thy good by the ſanctity of thy Life and Actions. Where-ever thou art, even in thy very Retirements, carry thy ſelf with a Reverence to thy Angel that attends thee, nor dare to act that in his Preſence, which thou wouldſt bluſh to do in the ſight of thy Fellow Creature. They are chaſt and pure Spirits, and therefore are drove away from thee, by all impure and diſhoneſt Actions; like ſome Creatures which Nature has made with a nice Reſentment of every thing that defiles their little Habitations, ſo do the noiſom Steems of Sin drive away theſe Tutelar Angels from their Guard and Stations in which they preſide over thee. Thus, deſtitute of their Protection, for thy ſins ſake, how wilt thou ſecure thy ſelf from the Deſigns of Infernal Spirits, that lie in wait to enſnare thee? How wilt thou ſave and defend thy ſelf from the Invaſion of thoſe various Dangers to which thou art every Hour of

thy Life expos'd, when the Angels withdraw themſelves from thee, and leave thee naked and unguarded? If thy Soul has not her Outworks guarded, the Enemy will inſinuate himſelf, and by falſe Perſwaſions make himſelf Maſter of all that is within. Angels are Miniſtring Spirits ſent by God; thy Faith muſt therefore firſt Reconcile thee to him, if ever thou expecteſt an Angel to be ſet over thee: Where the Grace of God is not, there is none of this Security or Protection. Let us then look on them as Inſtruments in the Hands of God, to forward us in the Works of our Salvation, but apply themſelves to do nothing without his immediate Direction. There is Joy before the Angels of Heaven, over one Sinner that repents; the Tears of the truly Penitent, which they ſhed upon the Account of their Sins, create a chearfulneſs at their Converſion in theſe Holy Angels, who deſert their Guardianſhip over the hardned and unrelenting Heart: Let us then ſet about the great Work of our Repentance, that we may raiſe Joy to theſe Bleſſed Spirits. Their Natures are Spiritual and Heavenly, let us exalt our Thoughts to the things that are above of the ſame Nature with them, that they may take a Delight and Pleaſure in being preſent with, and preſiding over us. Tho' Angels, they are yet indued with Humility,

mility, and are perfect Strangers to Pride, insomuch that they disdain not to officiate about the Heads even of little Infants; Why then does Man, who is but Dust and Ashes, grow Proud, when Spirits themselves condescend to such low and humble Employments? The Designs of the destroying Angel are most to be fear'd in our last Moments, when we come to dye; for then are our last Efforts for Eternity, and he steels in to wound us in that part where we lie most expos'd, and send us *bruis'd in the Heel* into another World. 'Tis at this time we most stand in need of the Protection of Angels, to guard us from those fiery Darts with which he is constantly plying us, and to conduct our Souls, when they are upon their flight from our Bodies, into the heavenly Paradise. While *Zacharias* was busy in the Temple, upon the Office of his Ministry, the Angel of the Lord appear'd unto him: And thus, if thou delight'st in the Duties of God's Word, and art constant in the exercise of thy Devotions, 'twill be thy greatest Pleasure to think thou hast Angels playing about thy Head to protect thee. O most Merciful God, who, by the Ministry of thy Holy Angels, do'st lead us through the Dangers that lie scatter'd up and down in our way through the Wilderness of this Life, give them

likewiſe thy Commiſſion, to go before us and conduct us into thy Heavenly Kingdom.

The Prayer.

O GOD, thou Father of Spirits, whoſe Throne is continually ſurrounded with Myriads of Holy Angels, always ready to execute the Commands of thy Divine Will, ſend one of theſe Bleſſed Meſſengers from above, to guard and defend me from thoſe numberleſs Dangers to which I am continually expos'd; give him thy Commiſſion to remove from me thoſe Accidents, which in the Courſe of neceſſary Cauſes, muſt otherwiſe befal me, unleſs thou protect me; let him divert the evil Intentions of my Enemies, and give me notice, by ſome external Signs or inward Impreſſions, of thoſe impending Dangers I am at any time, through my own Folly or Ignorance, running into. But above all, command him to chaſe away from me all the Powers of Darkneſs, that none of the Deſigns of evil Spirits againſt my Soul or Body may prevail to hurt me. And O that I may never by any Impurity of mine, offend or drive away this Guardian which thou art pleas'd to ſet over me! but that he may be with me in all my ways, and at laſt ſtand by me in the great Conflict and Agonies

Agonies of Death, and having kindly diſſolv'd the Union of my Soul and Body, may conduct the one into the Manſions of the Bleſſed, and when the Day of Reſurrection ſhall come, may with Joy call my Body from the Grave, and lead me Soul and Body into that perfect State of Bliſs, which was in Chriſt prepar'd for them before the Foundations of the World. *Amen*, Lord Jeſu; *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXVII.

Of the Wiles of the Devil.

2 Cor. II. 11.

We are not ignorant of his Devices.

THink with thy ſelf, O devout Soul, in what continual danger thou art in from thy greateſt Enemy, an Enemy who has boldneſs enough to attempt any thing, ſtrong in his Temptations, ſubtil in his Devices, furniſh'd with all the Inſtruments of Inſinuation, indefatigable in his Aſſaults, and one that can ſuit himſelf to all the various Deſigns he has upon thy Soul. He it is who draws thee in, to commit a Multiplicity of Sins, and when his Temptations have ſuc-

ſucceeded by thy compliance to his Suggeſtions, he turns thy Accuſer before the Tribunal of thy Great Judge; when he deals with Man, he charges God himſelf with a too ſtrict Juſtice, and a want of Mercy; when he appears before God, he charges Man with Sin and the want of Duty; and 'tis he that raiſes all thoſe Accuſations which Men ſo uncharitably charge one upon another. He firſt ſtrictly obſerves to what Sins every Man ſtands moſt inclin'd, and then ſpreads his Temptations baited according to our ſeveral Inclinations. Like a skilful Engineer, he raiſes not his Batteries againſt our ſtrongeſt Holds, nor attacks us where we are beſt defended; but bends all his Efforts againſt the pliantneſs of our Natures, and the weakneſs of our Affections. One repulſe will not drive him out the Field, but being recruited with a freſh ſupply of Forces, he turns upon us with a greater Courage, to try whither by the tireſomeneſs of the Siege, or the careleſneſs of their own Defence, he can conquer thoſe who have hitherto bravely withſtood, and with ſucceſs reſiſted the violence of his ſtrongeſt Temptations. Who can ever expect to be ſo happy as to eſcape his treacherous Deſigns, who had boldneſs enough to attempt the Lord of Glory, and hope to ſucceed by the cunning Sophiſtry of ſubtile Arguments?

What

What Chriſtian can think to go unattempted by him, who deſir'd to have the ſifting even of the very Apoſtles? He was too cunning for *Adam*, even in the innocence of his Nature; What Conqueſts then muſt his ſubtilty raiſe to it ſelf, over the Nature of Man reſtor'd, but ſtill corrupted? He deceiv'd *Judas* even while he was under the Tuition of our Saviour, and one of the Bench of his immediate Diſciples: Whom ſhall he not be able to deceive, who are Men at large in the World, and liable to Errors and Miſtakes? Under whatever Conditions of Life we place our ſelves, ſtill we have reaſon to fear. In our Proſperity he puffs us up with Pride; in Adverſity, he ſuggeſts to us that we are neglected, and ſinks us into Diſpair. If he finds a Man delighted with Parſimony, 'tis a Pleaſure he takes to bind him under the Slavery of a never to be ſatisfied Luſt after Riches. If a Man be endued with a Largeneſs of Soul, he blows him up, and ſtings him with the Goads of an exceſſive Paſſion. If he ſees a Man by his Conſtitution of a chearful and alacrious Spirit, he carries him on beyond the Bounds of Mirth, even into the Confines of a downright Madneſs. Where he meets with Men heated with a Religious Zeal, he endeavours to draw them into the Snares of a vain Superſtition. Thoſe in Places of Honour, he fires

fires with Ambition. While he is courting us to ſin, he larges upon the Mercy of God; when he has gain'd his Point, the ſtrictneſs of the Divine Juſtice is made too great for us ever to expect his Pardon; by the firſt he's for leading us to Preſumption, by the latter driving us to Deſpair. Sometimes he works upon us by outward Perſecutions, at other times he ſhoots into our Hearts pointed Temptations. One while he attacks us openly with the utmoſt Violence, at another he inſinuates himſelf with an unfelt Secrecy. He baits our Tables with Gluttony, our Beds with Luſt, and our Diverſions with Idleneſs, our Converſations with Envy, our Power with Avarice, our Authority with Paſſion, and our Honours with Pride. He fills our Hearts with Evil Thoughts, our Tongues with Evil Speeches, and our Hands with the Works of Iniquity. While waking he's always tempting us to Evil; and in our ſleep he ſteals into our Imaginations with impure Dreams. Thus where-ever we are, or whatever we are doing, we ought to be continually upon our Guard againſt all his Deſigns. We ſleep, but he's ever awake; we think our ſelves ſecure, but he like a Lyon goes about ſeeking whom he may devour. Shou'dſt thou ſee an enrag'd Lyon breaking out upon thee, How wou'd thy very Blood curdle

in

in thy veins with Fear? And when thou art told that this Infernal Lyon is always contriving thy ruin, can'ſt thou ſo much as ſlumber, much leſs place any Confidence in thy ſecurity? Think then, O my Soul, often think what Stratagems this Powerful Enemy of thine is continually forging againſt thee, and ſeek in time for thoſe Spiritual Weapons by which alone he is to be reſiſted. Let thy Loins be guirt with Truth, and guarded with the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs. Cloath thy ſelf with the Perfect Righteouſneſs of thy Saviour, and thou ſhalt be ſafe from all the Temptations of Infernal Power. Hide thy ſelf in the Wounds of thy dying Saviour, as often as the Arrows of the Wicked one are abroad, and they ſhall fly ſecurely over thy head. The true believer is in Chriſt. As therefore the utmoſt Malice of the Devil has no power over him, ſo neither can it have, over the truly Faithful. Let thy Feet be ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of Peace. Let the Confeſſion of all that Chriſt has done and ſuffer'd for us be continually ſounding in our Ears, and frequently in our Mouths; ſo ſhall no Temptation be ever able to hurt us. There's a ſecret Charm in the Articles of our Faith, and an Irriſiſtible Eloquence that will chaſe away this Evil Spirit from us. Take to thy ſelf the Shield of Faith, where-

with

with thou ſhalt be able to quench the Fiery Darts of the Wicked. Faith is of ſo Powerful a Nature, as to be able to remove Mountains, 'twill ſurmount all thy Doubts, diſarm the ſevereſt Perſecutions, and carry thee off Conqueror over all thy Temptations. The deſtroying Angel paſs'd by thoſe Houſes of the *Iſraelites* whoſe Doors were ſprinkled with the Blood of the Paſchal Lamb: Nor ſhall the ſame Angel do any hurt to thoſe who have their Hearts ſprinkled with the Blood of Chriſt. Faith relies upon the Promiſes of God, which Hell it ſelf ſhall never be able to ſhake; therefore it ſtands as firm as thoſe Promiſes upon which 'tis built. Faith fills the Soul with ſo bright a Light, that no Temptation can ſteal in undiſcover'd. By Faith we believe our Sins to be waſh'd away in the Depths of Divine Mercy, in which the Fiery Darts of the Adverſary are eaſily quench'd. We muſt likewiſe put on the Helmet of Salvation, and guard our Heads with a Holy Hope. Bear thy ſelf up under all Temptations, conſidering the end for which God ſuffers thee to be Tempted; for 'tis he that preſides over all our Conflicts, and Crowns the Conquerors after they have born the heat of the day. Had we no Enemy to contend with, we ſhould loſe the Honour of the Engagement, we ſhould be fruſtrated of

all

all the Glories of a Victory, and the rewards that attend it: Better is it for us to be engag'd in ſuch Spiritual Conflicts, which may draw us more nearly to God, than to enjoy a Tranquility from Temptations, which has even this Temptation in it ſelf, as to make us forget him. We muſt likewiſe take to our ſelves the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Let the Comforts of the Scriptures have greater weight with thee, than all the Devil himſelf can ſay againſt thee. 'Twas from the Scriptures our Saviour fetch'd his Arguments, and Triumph'd over all the Temptations with which he was Attack'd; and from the ſame Quiver do all good Chriſtians draw thoſe Darts with which they become Conquerors in the ſame Conflicts. In ſhort, thou haſt thy Prayers to fly to, as a ſafe refuge againſt all Temptations: As often as thy Soul is ready to ſink, and is beat upon by the violence of any inward Storms, call upon Chriſt in thy Prayers, and waken him to ſave thee from Periſhing. Our outward Enemies are to be ſubdu'd by an open Violence; but theſe inward aſſaults upon our Souls are to be repuls'd by the prevailing efficacy of our Prayers. And do thou, O Bleſſed Jeſu, both fight for us, and in us, that in thy Strength we may become more than Conquerors.

The Prayer.

O God, who know'ſt me to be ſet in the midſt of ſo many and great dangers, that by reaſon of the Frailty of my Nature I cannot always ſtand upright; Grant me ſuch Strengh and Protection, as may ſupport me in all Dangers, and carry me through all Temptations; then will I not be afraid of any of the Powers of Darkneſs, nor ſhall the Suggeſtions of the Devil, nor thoſe Arts by which he lies in wait to deceive my Soul, have any force in them to make me quit my Integrity, or be falſe to my Pious Reſolutions. In the ſtrength of thee my God, will I go out to meet all the Enemies of my Soul. Give me that Divine Wiſdom which is from above, and I ſhall eaſily baffle all the cunning and imaginary Wiſdom here below, which has the Prince of this World for its Author. Let me, O Lord, be ever ſenſible of the neceſſity and advantage of thy Service, and I ſhall never leave thee for all the tempting offers of Sin and Slavery. The proſpect of an Eternal Glory, ſhall over-balance the Allurements of this Life: And the vaſt concerns of another World, the value of my Soul, and the Mercies of my Redeemer, ſhall never prevail with me to exchange

exchange theſe for any thing, nor all things on this ſide Heaven. And do thou, O Bleſſed Jeſu, who did'ſt ſo Glorioufly Triumph over the moſt cunning Temptations of the Great Seducer, be ever with me, and at hand to ſupport me, for thy Mercies ſake. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXVIII.

General Rules for a Holy Life.

Titus II. 11, 12.

For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appear'd to all Men.

Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live Soberly, Righteouſly and Godly in this preſent World.

EVery day thou draw'ſt nearer to Death, Judgment, and Eternity. Let it therefore be the Meditation of thy every days Thoughts, how thou ſhalt be able to defend thy ſelf againſt the ſevere ſcrutinies of Death and Judgment, and what thy Condition ſhall be in a Life of Eternity. Set a ſtrict guard over thy Thoughts, Words and Actions, for of all theſe thou muſt one day give an impartial Account. Every Evening imagine with

with thy ſelf, that Death may be with thee before the Morning Dawn; and at Sun-riſe, conſider that it may overtake thee before the Twelve hours of the Day are finiſh'd. Put not off thy Repentance and the deſigns thou haſt of becoming better till to morrow; for thou know'ſt not whether thou ſhalt live to ſee the Morrow's Sun: But this thou know'ſt, that thou ſhalt ſurely dye. Nothing is ſo great an Enemy to a Holy Life, as delay. If thou do'ſt deſpiſe the inward call of the Bleſſed Spirit, thou ſhalt never arrive to the happineſs of a true Converſion. Let not the Thoughts of living till thou art Old, defer thy Repentance, and the good thou deſign'ſt; but offer up to God in the flower of thy Youth: The Young Man knows not whither he ſhall live till he's Old; but this is certain beyond diſpute, that if he dies in a State of Impenitency, he is loſt for ever. No Seaſon of our Lives is ſo proper for the Service of God, as when the Youthful Conſtitutions of our Bodies are ſtrong, and the Vigour of our Minds moſt lively and intenſe. Purchaſe not the favour of any Man living by mean Flatteries and a ſinful Compliance; for 'tis not Man, but God, that ſhall one Day ſit in Judgment over thee: Let therefore his Favour be preferable in thy eſteem, to all that the utmoſt Power of Man can pretend to do for thee. We either make farther

farther advances in the ways of a Holy Life, or we loſe ground and fall ſhort. Let it therefore be the daily Examination into thy Life, whither thy Piety grows upon thy hands, or whither it waſts. To ſtand ſtill in the ways of the Lord, is to go backward; be not therefore pleas'd with thy ſelf that thou maintain'ſt thy ground, but let thy Piety carry thee forward to farther advances in the ways of God's Commandments. Let there be a ſweet Deportment towards all thou Converſeſt with, an Inoffenſiveneſs in thy Carriage, and a well-choſen Familiarity to thoſe few thou ſhalt take as Friends into thy Boſom. Maintain a ſtrict Piety towards God, Chaſtity towards thy ſelf, and Juſtice towards thy Neighbours; Uſe thy Friend with Favour, thy Enemy with Patience, all Mankind with a Univerſal Good will; and as much as in thee lies, let thy Goodneſs extend it ſelf to all that need it. Be dying to thy ſelf and to thy Sins whilſt thou liveſt here, ſo ſhalt thou live to God when thou com'ſt to dye. Let Pity be always viſible in thy Affections, Courteouſneſs in thy Looks, Humility in thy Dreſs, Modeſty in thy Converſation, and Patience under all thy Sufferings. Let thy Thoughts conſtantly reflect on what has paſs'd, and let this be the Examination of thy ſelf, What Evil have I done? What Good have I omitted to do?

And

And what time have I miſpent which might have been much better employ'd? And when thou haſt recall'd thy Thoughts to thoſe things that are before thee, think how ſhort that Life is thou haſt to lead upon Earth, how great a Work thou haſt to do, and how few ſhall in the end be ſav'd. Let Futurity be always in thy Mind; Death, than which nothing is ſo terrible to the Thoughts of Man; Judgment, than which nothing is ſo Amazing; and the Torments of Hell, than which nothing is ſo Intolerable. Let thy Evening Prayers blot out the Sins of the Day paſt, and the laſt day beg Pardon for the Crimes of the preceeding Week. Let it be thy Evening Thought, how many Souls have that day gone down into Eternal Darkneſs; and be thankful to God that he has given thee a longer time for thy Repentance. There are Three things always above and over thee, let not the Thoughts of them ever ſlip from thy Memory; The All-ſeeing Eye of God; his Ear that hears thee in all that cometh out of thy Mouth; and thoſe Books of his Omniſcience in which all thy Actions are Recorded. God will impart to thee all the effects of Infinite Goodneſs, do thou as freely exert thy ſelf, and let thy Neighbour partake of all the Goodneſs thou art able to ſhow him; That is the moſt uſeful Life, which is wholly ſpent

in Acts of Service to our Fellow-Creatures. Carry thy ſelf with Obedience and Reſpect towards thy Superiours, with thy ready Council and Aſſiſtance to thy Equals, and let thy Inferiors have thy Protection, and do thou inſtruct their Ignorance. Let thy Body be in ſubjection to thy Mind, and thy Mind to God. Bewail the Sins of thy miſpent Life, ſet no greater value upon thy preſent enjoyments than they juſtly deſerve; and let thoſe Bleſſings that are reſerv'd for thee in Reverſion, be the earneſt deſire of thy Soul. Call thy Sins to Remembrance, that thou may'ſt be ſorry for them: Remember that thou muſt one day dye, and let this Thought prevail with thee to forſake them: Remember that there is a Judgment to come, and be afraid; but let the thoughts of God's Mercy be thy Comfort and keep thee from Deſpair. As much as poſſible withdraw thy ſelf from the World, and give thy ſelf up wholly to the Service of God. Be always jealous leſt thou ſhoud'ſt be betray'd into Impurity by a Life of Eaſe, into Pride by a Life of Plenty; and into a neglect of God by a Life of Care and Buſineſs. Let it not be thy Ambition to pleaſe any one but Chriſt, and fear no diſpleaſure that can fall ſo heavy upon thee as his. Let it be thy conſtant Prayer to God, That he would Command what is agreeable to his

Will,

Will, and grant thee what he ſhall thus Command: That he wou'd hide whatever thou haſt done amiſs, and govern thee for the future in all thy ways. Thou ought'ſt in reality to be what thou woud'ſt appear to be; for God Judges not according to the outſide of things, but as they truly are in themſelves. Set a guard upon thy Lips, and let thy words be few; becauſe thou ſhalt be judg'd for every idle Word that proceedeth out of thy Mouth. Whatever thy Actions are, they paſs not away; but like Seeds they will riſe up againſt thee, and determine thy State to all Eternity. If thou ſoweſt to the Fleſh, thou ſhalt of the Fleſh reap Corruption; but if thou ſoweſt to the Spirit, thou ſhalt of the Spirit reap Life Everlaſting. The Honours of this World will not follow thee into the next, nor the Riches thou haſt amaſs'd to thy ſelf go along with thee; thy Pleaſures will then leave thee, and the Vanities of life forſake thee; nothing but thy Deeds, whither they be good, or whither they be evil, will follow thee to the Grave. Such therefore as thou woud'ſt be found at the day of Judgment, ſuch do thou in thy Life time appear to be in the ſight of God. Value not thy ſelf upon thy preſent acquiſitions, but conſider ſtill that thou art yet Imperfect, and want'ſt many things to compleat

pleat thy Happineſs: Be not proud upon the account of what God has already thought fit to give thee; but thou ſhalt find reaſon enough to humble thy ſelf, when thou conſidereſt what is ſtill behind and has hitherto been denied thee. Learn to improve thy Life, while God permits thee to Live, upon to day while 'tis call'd to day depends thy Eternal Happineſs or Eternal Miſery: We cannot ſerve God in our Graves; but after Death, comes on the day of Juſt Retribution. In the next Life there is nothing farther for us to do but to expect our Reward according to our Deeds. Let a Pious Meditation on theſe things, bring thee to a knowledge of thy ſelf, and let that knowledge produce a ſtrong remorſe upon thy Soul for all thy Sins, and make thee Devout and Earneſt at the Throne of Grace. To retire ſilently into thy own Breaſt, is many times the Happy means of procuring an inward Peace. The farther thou withdraw'ſt thy ſelf from the World, the more acceptable ſhalt thou be to God. Whatever thy Soul deſires to have, ask it at the hands of God; and what thou at preſent haſt, acknowledge him to be the Author of it all. He is unworthy of the good things he receives, who is ſo ungrateful as not to thank the hands from which he receives them; and the Streams of the Divine Favour ſtop their courſe, where

there are no returns back to the Fountain from which they flow. Whatever Accidents of Life befal thee, improve them to thy Good: When thou art Bleſs'd with Proſperity, think what a Noble Subject thou haſt before thee for thy Praiſes and Thanksgivings: And when the Wiſdom of God ſhall think fit to exerciſe thee with Adverſity, think it ſent as a kind Meſſenger to draw thee to Repentance and into a nearer Affiance in himſelf. Show the excellency of thy Power, in aſſiſting the Weak; of thy Wiſdom, in inſtructing the Ignorant; and of thy Riches, in Acts of Goodneſs and Charity. Let not Adverſity break thy Spirits, nor Proſperity make thee Proud: Let Chriſt be the Great Example of thy Life, and follow him cheerfully in the Way thou haſt to go, that thou may'ſt at length overtake him in a Country that ſhall be thy Home for ever. Let it be thy greateſt Care in all Conditions of thy Life, to carry thy ſelf with the utmoſt Humility, and with the moſt ardent Charity: Let the one raiſe the Affections of thy Heart to an entire Love of God, and the other ſtifle and ſuppreſs all Inclinations to Pride. Look upon God as a Father to thee by his Clemency, and as a Lord over thee by his Diſcipline: A Father while he exerciſes his Power with Lenity, and a Lord when he

he chaſtiſes thee with Severity; love him therefore as a Father with the Duty that becomes a Son, and fear him as thy Lord with that Awe and Reverence that ſuch a relation neceſſarily requires from thee; love him becauſe he will have Mercy upon thee, and fear him becauſe he is an Enemy to thy Sins. Fear the Lord, and put thy Confidence in him; acknowledge thy own vileneſs, and tell forth all his Favours. And do thou, O God, who haſt given us a Will to pleaſe thee, grant us Power to perform it.

The Prayer.

O GOD, thou God of Holineſs, and Fountain of all Purity, without whom nothing is Holy, nothing is Pure, communicate to my Soul as great a Meaſure of thy Holineſs and Purity as I am capable of bearing while I am in this Life. Guide me into all the Duties of a Holy and Religious Life, and whatever thou haſt commanded me to do, which relates to the Worſhip of thy ſelf, or my Duty towards my Neighbour, whereby I may ſave my Precious and Immortal Soul, give me Grace to make all theſe the conſtant Practice of my Life. O that I might be Holy as thou art Holy! Pure as thou art Pure! and be found un-

blameable at the Great Day of the Appearance of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXIX.
Againſt a bold Security.

1 Pet. IV. 18.

If the Righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, Where ſhall the Ungodly and Sinner appear?

REaſon with thy ſelf, O devout Soul, upon the Difficulty of being ſaved, and thou wilt eaſily diſcard all Security from thy Thoughts. A State of Indefection is by no means to be expected by thee here, ſince Relapſes have crept into Heaven it ſelf, and into a State of Innocence, How much leſs can'ſt thou think thy ſelf ſecure from falling, in the midſt of a Tempting and Enſnaring World? Angels fell even in the preſence of God, and *Adam* amidſt all the Pleaſures of Paradiſe; he who was created after the Image of God, was yet made an eaſy Prey to the Suggeſtions of the Devil. *Solomon*'s Wiſdom, tho' the greateſt upon Earth, cou'd not ſecure its Maſter from thoſe Luſtful Defilements, which carried him to commit the groſſeſt Idolatry. *Judas*, tho' one of the immediate Diſciples of our Saviour,

Saviour, and who was daily inſtructed from the Mouth of that moſt Divine Preacher of Saving Knowledge, was yet betray'd to the higheſt Apoſtacy; he ſunk his Soul, through Covetouſneſs, into the dark Abyſs of a deep Deſpair. *David* was a Man after God's own Heart, and the Darling of Heaven; but by Murder and Adultery he became liable to the Wrath of God. When thou haſt ſuch Inſtances before thee of the Frailty even of the Beſt of Men, What Preſumption is it in thee, to think thou can'ſt be ſecure from falling? Place all thy Confidence in the Promiſes of God, and this ſhall be thy greateſt Security againſt all the Aſſaults and Violence of the great Seducer. There is nothing but a true Faith, and a Life of Piety anſwerable to that Faith, built upon the Promiſes of God, that can never deceive us, upon which we can rely with any Security on this Heaven: When we ſhall be in poſſeſſion of the Happineſs to come, then we ſhall have no fear upon us of falling. While we are working out our Salvation, a Holy Fear and Miſtruſt of our ſelves, that we are not ſo good as we might and ought to be, is inſeparable from all our Religious Duties; nor ought our Religion to be without ſuch a Holy Fear and Pious Miſtruſt of our ſelves. Be not ſo ſecure under thy Afflictions, as to imagine

thou art ſafe, becauſe God ſometimes chaſtiſes thoſe whom he loves; but whatever thoſe Croſſes and Afflictions be with which thou art exercis'd, look upon them as the Puniſhments for thy Sins; for God often puniſhes the ſecret Sins of the Heart, with open and publick Inſtances of his Wrath. Think how grievous a Guilt thou haſt contracted upon thy Soul, and let it make thee afraid of that Juſtice that is due to thee for thy Sins. Nor on the other Hand let Proſperity make thee too ſecure of thy Condition; for that Man has reaſon to fear God is angry with him, who meets with no kind Checks or Corrections from him. What are all the Afflictions of the truly Pious? They are like Arrows indeed, whoſe points are ſteep'd in Gall; but they are ſent by a Merciful and Indulgent Hand. God many times paſſes the Reprobate and Obdurate Sinner by unpuniſh'd as to this World, who has render'd himſelf unworthy of all the Merciful Ends of ſuch a Puniſhment, and aſſigns him over to a ſevere Reverſion in another World, that ſhall be Eternal: The ſucceſsful Happineſs of Man, without any Interruption, is often a ſad preſage and foreboding of an Eternal Miſery: Nothing is more Unhappy than the Happineſs of Sinners: Nothing ſo wretched as he that is ignorant of what a ſad Condition he is in. Whereſoever thou

thou turn'ſt thy Thoughts, thou wilt find abundant Reaſon for thy Sorrow, and enough to cure any Confidence or Security in thy ſelf: Think of that God above, whom we have all offended; thoſe Eternal Torments below, that we have all deſerv'd; caſt thy Thoughts backward, upon the Sins we have committed; and look forward upon that Judgment we have ſo much reaſon to be afraid of; think what inward Guilt we have contracted upon our Conſciences, and how enamour'd we have been with the outward Enjoyments of this World; think with ſhame how ſhort a Progreſs thou haſt made, ſince thou firſt ſet out; let thy preſent Condition make the lament that thou art gone no farther, and the Thoughts whither thou art going make the tremble. The Gate that muſt admit thee into Happineſs is ſtrait; but the Way that leads to it is yet ſtraiter. God has given thee the Treaſure of Faith; but yet it is in earthen Veſſels, ſubject to be ſometimes broken by Humane Frailties and Infirmities. He has appointed Angels to protect thee; but at the ſame time the Devil is buſy about thee, and ready to throw in his Temptations to ſeduce thee. God has renew'd thee in the Spirit of thy Mind; but thou haſt ſtill ſome remains of the firſt Corruption of thy Nature. Thou art reſtor'd to thee Favour of

God; but thou art not yet in poſſeſſion of his Eternal Glory. There is a place provided for thee in Heaven; but thou muſt make thy Way to it in oppoſition to the Trials and Afflictions of the preſent World. God has promis'd Pardon to the truly Penitent; but has not promis'd he will force the Freedom of his Will, and give him a Repentance by any irreſiſtable Violence of his Grace. There are Eternal Comforts that avail thee in another World; yet thou muſt make thy Way to them through Troubles and Afflictions in this. A promis'd Crown is the Reward of all thy Sufferings; but thou muſt fight thy way to it through many a ſevere Trial. The Promiſes of God are unalterable; but thou muſt be ſo too in all the Duties of a Holy Life. Where the Servant is defective in the Duties that are commanded him, God is not excluded from the Execution of what he threatens: We ought therefore to melt into continual Tears, and laying aſide all Confidence and Preſumption of our Security, lament our preſent Condition, leaſt by a juſt Judgment, known only to God, we be forſaken by him, and left under the deſtroying power of Infernal Spirits. Thou may'ſt delight thy ſelf with all the Pleaſures of the Divine Grace, whilſt thou feel'ſt the Influence of it upon thy Soul; but

but thou muſt do it with this Submiſſion, not to think thou hadſt any peremptory Right to that which was ſolely the Gift of God, nor to think thy ſelf in ſure poſſeſſion of it, as to be out of a poſſibility of ever loſing it again; thou muſt not thus treat the Grace of God with ſuch a preſuming Confidence, leaſt when God withdraws the Bleſſing of it from thee, and withholds his Hand, thou fall ſuddenly into an anguiſh of Mind, and be ſeiz'd with a more than ordinary Grief, for the Loſs of that, in which thou placedſt a greater Confidence than became thee; happy art thou, if thy utmoſt Care be to keep thy ſelf clear, and avoid that careleſs Security that begets in Men all thoſe Sins that proceed from a ſupine Incogitancy. God will not leave thee nor forſake thee; but have a care thou do'ſt not firſt leave God. He has given thee his Grace; let it be thy earneſt prayer that thou may'ſt perſevere in it, even to the End of thy Life. God bids thee be aſſur'd of thy Salvation, upon thoſe Conditions he has made the Terms of it; but he has not encourag'd in thee an abſolute Security. Thou muſt ſhow an undaunted Courage in all the Conflicts thou art engag'd in, that thou may'ſt one Day enjoy the pleaſant Triumph of all thy Conqueſts. The inward Corruption of thy Nature is in an

open Hoſtility againſt thee; and is an Enemy, ſo much the more formidable, by how much the nearer thou carrieſt it about thee in thy own Breaſt. The World is at conſtant variance with thee, and ſurrounds thee with its Temptations, and the ſtronger its Allurements are, the greater reaſon thou haſt to be afraid of them. And yet while God is thy Strength, thou muſt not decline the Engagement with all the Enemies of thy Soul; thus ſupported thou ſhalt be able to make an eaſy Conqueſt. To repoſe thy ſelf upon an unactive Security, is not the way to be thus Victorious; but a conſtant application of the utmoſt Vigour of thy Soul. This Life is the great Seaſon of Action; 'tis then thou art moſt ſtrongly attack'd, when thou know'ſt nothing of thy Enemies being in the Field againſt thee, while they ſeem to decline all open Acts of Hoſtility, and give thee ſome reſpite from Violence, they are all this while gathering their Forces for a freſh and ſtronger Aſſault: They are ever awake, and do'ſt thou ſleep? They lye continually upon their Arms, and are in a Readineſs to aſſail thee, and do'ſt thou make no Proviſion to oppoſe them? Many faint by the way and give out before they arrive to that Country of theirs to which they were travelling. How many *Iſraelites* died in the Wilderneſs, none

none of whom obtain'd the Bleſſings of the Promis'd Land? How many of the Faithful Sons of *Abraham* periſh in their Paſſage thro' the craggy Deſerts of this Life, and never come to enjoy the Promis'd Inheritance of that Kingdom that is ſealed in the Heavens? Nothing will ſo effectually help us to diſcard all poſitive Security of our Salvation, as to ſit down and think with our ſelves how few Inſtances we have, of thoſe who have held out to the End of their Lives. Let the Glory of Heaven then be the only Deſire of our Souls, and let us paſſionately long for our arrival into thoſe Bleſſed Manſions; let our Concern that we are not yet in poſſeſſion of it be ſuch, and our Fear that we may never be, ſo ſtrongly affect us, as to be delighted with nothing but thoſe things, that are either able to forward us in our Paſſage, or give us comfort that we ſhall one Day obtain the End of our Hopes, the Salvation of our Souls. What advantage will it be to thee, to enjoy theſe falſe Pleaſures for a moment, if thou muſt pay for them with an Eternity of Sorrow? What Mirth can this World afford us, when every thing that pleaſes us is tranſitory, while our Puniſhment muſt be Eternal? Do we live as ſecurely here, as if we had already paſs'd the Critical Hour of our Deaths, and Judgment had already paſs'd

in

in favour of us? Our Saviour has told us, he will come to Judge us in an Hour that we think not of: They are the Words of Truth himſelf, and that they may make the deeper Impreſſion he again repeats them, and bids us attend to them, and be afraid. And if our Lord will come ſo ſurprizingly upon us, we had reaſon to be extreamly fearful, leaſt we appear before him unprovided of our Accompts; and if we have them not ready, how ſhall we be ever able to defend our ſelves againſt the Impartial Inquiſitions of that Great Day? The Sentence that ſhall be paſs'd upon us at that moment, can never, never be recall'd; that ſhort Inſtant ſhall determine what our Condition ſhall be to all Eternity, and every Man ſhall receive his Sentence, whither he ſhall Eternally Live or Die, be Damn'd or Sav'd, Puniſh'd or Rewarded. And, O Lord, do thou who haſt given us Grace to do that which is Good, give us greater Supplies of it, to perſevere in all Goodneſs to the End of our Lives.

The Prayer.

O LORD, when I conſider thy Perfect Holineſs, and my own Impiety; thy ſpotleſs Purity, and my Defilement; thy Infinite Juſtice, and my Sins that have ſo highly

highly provok'd it; I tremble in thy Preſence, and bow down before the Throne of thy Majeſty with confuſion of Face, not daring to truſt in my own Righteouſneſs, but in thy manifold and great Mercies. Look down, O Lord, in pity upon thy humble Servant, who diſcards all Security in any thing I can do for my ſelf, for I am altogether unprofitable, even in the beſt of all my Services. And tho' I know thou art a God of Infinite Love and Mercy, yet ſo great have been my Sins againſt thee, that I cannot help being afraid; nothing but the Merits of thy Son, are able to remove my Fears, and that they may be applied to my Soul, is the ardent Prayer of thy poor and humble Servant. And to this End, give me a lively Faith in him, and an unfeign'd Repentance for all the Sins and Errors of my Life paſt, that by theſe Conditions of his Goſpel, attended with a ſincere Obedience to his Will, I may be ſuch a one to whom all the Merciful Deſigns of his coming into the World to ſave Sinners, may be made effectual to the Salvation of my Soul. O never let Preſumption be my ruin, nor let me meet with that ſad Diſappointment, that truſting in my own Righteouſneſs, I ſhou'd find my ſelf at the Day of Judgment, among the Number of thoſe Hypocrites, who rais'd to themſelves falſe Hopes of Salvation.

And

And conſidering, O Lord, with how many and great Dangers I am continually ſurrounded, let the variety of Temptations, with which I am taken, make me ſenſible of my own Weakneſs and Inability, of the neceſſity of my Dependance upon thee my God, and let them keep me conſtantly upon my Guard; then will I go out and engage theſe Enemies of my Soul, being ſupported by thy Strength, having the powerful Interceſſion of the Bleſſed Jeſus my Advocate with thee, and the comfortable Aſſiſtance of thy Holy Spirit. O Lord hear me, and grant all theſe things that I have pray'd for, for the ſake of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, in whom I place all my Confidence, my moſt Merciful and Gracious Redeemer. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXX.

Of our Imitation of the Holy Life of Chriſt.

John XIII. 15.

I have given you an Example.

THE Spotleſs Life of the Holy Jeſus, is the moſt perfect Pattern, and gives us the moſt compleat Idea of all Vertue; every thing that he did, is an Inſtruction to us

us to follow ſo perfect an Example. Many are for laying hold of all the Advantages of a Saviour; but refuſe to tread in thoſe Steps which he has trod before them: They are for enjoying all the Benefits of his Life and Sufferings; but are unwilling to imitate him in his Vertues. *Learn of me*, ſays our Saviour, *for I am meek, and lowly of heart.* Unleſs in this thou art his Diſciple, thou can'ſt never lay a claim to the glorious Title of being a True Chriſtian. Let not the Sufferings of thy Saviour, be all thou haſt to rely on; but let the Actions of his Life, be the great Exemplar of thine. The Beloved of thy Soul, is repreſented to thee as White and Ruddy; let the ſprinkling of his Blood make thee like him in the one, and the Innocence of thy Life, make thee bear ſome Reſemblances to him in the other. How can'ſt thou be ſaid to be in love with thy Saviour, if thou art not enamour'd with the Sanctity of his Life? *If ye love me*, ſays he, *keep my Commandments*; our Diſobedience then, muſt diſcover our falſe Pretences to this love of him. His Holy Life is the prefect Standard of our Actions, preferable to all the Auſterities and Rules laid down by any of thoſe Orders, who are call'd by the Names of thoſe Saints, whoſe Examples they pretend to follow, whither *Franciſcans* or *Benedictines*. If thou wou'dſt be the adopted

adopted Son of God, obſerve and imitate the Holy Converſation of his only begotten Son, while he was here upon Earth. If thou wou'dſt be an Heir together with Chriſt, thou muſt make his Life thy Example. A vicious Life is a continu'd Vaſſalage, ſpent in the Service of the Devil himſelf; and who can be at the ſame time a Servant to the one, and not an Enemy to the other? The love we bear to our Vices, diſcovers the kind Opinion we have of the Author of them; and what Room is there for the love of Chriſt, where the love of the Devil has firſt taken poſſeſſion of our Affections. The love of God, is the love of Holineſs, for God is the Source from whence all the Vertues of a Holy Life are deriv'd; How then can he approve his love to God, who is an Enemy, and averſe to the Duties of a Holy Life? Our Works, are the great Touchſtone that muſt ſhow what love of God that is which we pretend to: 'Tis the Property of a Genuine Love, to be conformable to the Object with which 'tis delighted, to have the ſame Will, and the ſame Sentiments. If therefore Chriſt be the Object of thy love, thou wilt ſhow it by thy Obedience to every thing that he has made thy Duty; thy love to him, and to a Life of Holineſs, will be inſeparable, and being renew'd in the Spirit of thy Mind, thy Thoughts will be ſet upon

thoſe things that are above. Eternal Life conſiſts in the Knowledge of Chriſt; he that loves him not, does not know him. He that is averſe to the Vertues of Humility, Chaſtity, Gentleneſs, Temperance and Charity, is at the ſame time an Enemy to Chriſt; for in theſe Vertues was his Life wholly ſpent, who was Humble, Pure, Gentle, Temperate, and always laying out himſelf in the Works of a Univerſal Charity. Our Saviour himſelf tells us, that he knows not thoſe who fulfil not the Will of his Father which is in Heaven; and they that do not the Will of his Son, are as ignorant of him. Now what is this Will of his Father? The Apoſtle tells us, 'Tis our Sanctification. He is none of Chriſt's, in whom the Spirit of Chriſt is not; and where that is, it ſhows its Preſence, in thoſe Gifts and Fruits that always attend it; And what are they but Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance? As the Spirit reſted upon the Holy One of God, ſo does it abide with all true Believers who are in Chriſt; for the Soul, the belov'd of our Saviour, receives the Influencies of the Spirit from him, which are imparted as the moſt precious Ointment to heal all its Wounds. He that is join'd unto the Lord is one Spirit. There is a near Union between Chriſt and the Soul, in the myſter-

myſterious Communications of the Spirit, into all the Receſſes of it; and where the ſame Spirit is, he inclines our Wills and conforms our Actions to his own, which is, That we ſhould be Holy as he is Holy. A Life then that is not conformable to the Life of Chriſt, has nothing in it of a Love for God; but is an undeniable Argument, that the Spirit of Chriſt does not direct it. Is any thing more reaſonable, than that our whole Lives ſhou'd be led after his Example, who for our ſakes was conformable to us in every thing, Sin only excepted? God manifeſting himſelf in our fleſh, has ſet us an Example of a Holy Life, to ſhow us what we may be able to do, that no Man might take Refuge in the weakneſs of Humane Nature, to decline that Holineſs of which he has ſo fair a Pattern before him. No Life was ever led with that pleaſure and tranquility, as was the Life of our Saviour; for Chriſt was truly God; And what is there can be more pleaſant to our thoughts, or bring greater tranquility to our minds than God, when we conſider him as the utmoſt Good our Souls can deſire? The Life we lead here gives us at beſt but a ſhort-liv'd Pleaſure, a Pleaſure that draws along with it an Eternity of Sorrow. Whatever the byaſs of thy Soul be while thou liveſt upon Earth, to the ſame Inclinations it ſhall ſtand

bent

bent at the day of the Reſurrection: If in thy Life here thou begin'ſt to conform thy ſelf to that perfect Example of the Life of Chriſt; thou ſhalt riſe from the Grave with a fuller and more ſpiritual reſemblance of his Nature: But if through thy Vices thou haſt ſtampt the image of the Devil upon thy Soul, thou ſhalt riſe to the ſame Torments with him. *He that will follow me*, ſays our Saviour, *let him deny himſelf, and dayly take up his Croſs.* This denial of thy ſelf, will be the way to have Chriſt own thee for a Diſciple of his at the great day of Judgment. If for the ſake of him thou renounceſt the Honours of this World, the Love of it, and the Obſtinacy of thy own Will; thou ſhalt be made abundant amends for all theſe hardſhips upon thy ſelf, by being rewarded with the Honour, Love and Good-will of thy Saviour in another World: If it be thy Lot to carry thy Saviour's Croſs in thy paſſage through this Life; thou ſhalt be bleſſed with an Eternal Light free from all the dark Clouds of Sorrow: If Affliction be thy portion here, inexpreſſable Comforts ſhall be thy reward hereafter: If Perſecuted for thy Faith; thou ſhalt receive more than a ſufficient recompence for all thy Sufferings. *He that ſhall confeſs me before Men*, ſays our Saviour, *him alſo will I confeſs before my Father.*

ther which is in Heaven: But the vertue of ſuch a Confeſſion conſiſts not in a bare acknowledgment of the truth of what he Taught; but the great enquiry at the day of Judgment will be, how far our Lives have been anſwerable to that of Chriſt. *Whoſoever ſhall deny me before Men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* A wicked Life is a much more poſitive denial of our Saviour, than a bare verbal renunciation of him. He therefore that by his Actions is no Chriſtian, ſhall for thoſe Actions be denied as ſuch when he comes to appear before his Judge. 'Tis a true Faith in Chriſt that makes us Chriſtians, and by vertue of ſuch a Faith it is that we are engrafted as true Branches into him our ſpiritual Vine; if we become barren and unfruitful, the great Maſter of the Vineyard will cut us off as ſuperfluous and unprofitable; but the genuine Shoot, ſhall be made to bring forth much Fruit, having a true Faith for its nouriſhment. 'Tis a ſpurious Branch, that draws not its ſuccour from the Standard; nor is that Life ſupported by a Faith in Chriſt, which derives not all its ſpiritual nouriſhment from him. And do thou, O Bleſſed Jeſu, make us conformable to thy unſpotted Life while we are in this World, that we may be made wholly like thee in that which is to come.

The

The Prayer.

O Bleſſed Jeſu, thou greateſt Example of a ſpotleſs Life, thou Pattern of all thoſe Vertues thou haſt commanded me to walk in, fill my Soul with ſuch meaſures of thy Divine Grace, that I may be like thee in all thy imitable perfections! Let my retirements from the World be frequent as thine were, and may my Soul often enter into a near Communion with God, and may thy Father hear me, when I call upon him, for thy ſake. Let me be humble, as thou waſt humble, Charitable and forgiving to my Enemies, after thy Bleſſed Example, and let thy refuſing the Glories of the World, teach me to ſuppreſs all ambitious deſires of my own Greatneſs: Let thy contented Reſignation of thy ſelf to thy Father's Will, teach me to live above the temptations of the World; and when thou hadſt not where to lay thy Head, let me not repine or murmur at the ſevereſt hardſhips or ſufferings of a Life of Poverty. Let not the Flatteries of the World ever prevail with me to tranſgreſs thy Father's Will, ſince thou haſt ſhew'd me how little they are to be regarded, by making thy ſelf of no reputation. Let no provocations to Anger or Revenge ever diſturb that evenneſs of my Mind in which

which thou art my Example, who cou'dſt bear the Malice and Revilings of thy Enemies with the utmoſt ſweetneſs of Moderation, and didſt anſwer all their Reproaches with calm Arguments, and with a modeſt Silence. O may I ever follow thee in that unparalell'd Goodneſs of thine in praying for my very Enemies, and impute all their Malice, with the higheſt Charity, to their Ignorance! O Bleſſed Jeſu! theſe were thy Bright Vertues, this the Glorious Example thou haſt ſet me. O look down in pity upon me, and ſtrengthen all my weak and imperfect endeavours to be like thee, that being planted in the likeneſs of thy Death, I may be alſo rais'd in the likeneſs of thy Reſurrection. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXI.

Of Self-denial.

Mark X. 21.

Come, take up the Croſs and follow me.

HE that will follow me, ſays our Saviour, let him deny himſelf. To deny a Man's ſelf, is to renounce all ſinful compliance with the Love of our Selves or our own Intereſt:

Intereſt: Self-love will claſh and interfere with our Love of God. If thou wou'dſt follow the example of thy Saviour, thou muſt be as dead to the World as he was, and by thy hatred even to thy ſelf, approve the intenſeneſs of that love which thou haſt for him. Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground and die, it bringeth forth no Fruit; which is a lively Emblem to thee of the Fruitfulneſs of the Spirit, where thy Heart is truly Mortified, and thy Affections to thy ſelf. *Get thee out of thy own Country*, ſays God to *Abraham*, *and from thy kindred, and from thy Father's Houſe, into a Land that I will ſhew thee*; had he not been Obedient to this ſevere Command, he had never been rank'd amongſt the greateſt Prophets; nor muſt thou be ever reckon'd a true Diſciple of thy Saviour, nor under the happy Conduct of his Spirit, till thou art ready to quit thy deareſt Enjoyments with the ſame Reſignation to the Divine Will. Self-love is a ſtrong Principle Planted in our Nature by God himſelf; nor are we otherwiſe Commanded to act againſt the Dictates of it, than where it interferes with that much ſtronger Love which we ought to have for God: This we muſt keep entire, and deny the Love we have for our ſelves, when that Love ſtands in competition with our Love and Duty to him. 'Tis impoſſible for thee at one and the ſame view,

to

to take a proſpect of the Heavens and thoſe things that are under thy Feet; and 'tis as impoſſible for thee at the ſame time to Love thy ſelf, with an inordinate Paſſion, and God as he deſerves. To Love our Souls is the greateſt good we can do for them; and to Love God who is the Perfection of Goodneſs ſhows, that this Love for our Soul is real. Whatever thou makeſt the darling Object of thy Love, thou placeſt in the Room of God, and dethroneſt him to make room for the other; whatever has the utmoſt of thy Affections, will terminate thy Happineſs; but God alone is a Being of Infinite Perfection: And for a Man wholly to Love himſelf, is to Deify his own Nature to the Diſhonour of God; which is the groſſeſt Idolatry he can be Guilty of. Whatever thy Soul Paſſionately Loves, thou look'ſt on it as thy only Happineſs, and that which can fully ſatisfy all thy deſires: But 'tis God only from whom the Original and End of all Created Beings is deriv'd and terminated; 'tis he alone who being boundleſs in himſelf, can fully ſatisfy all the boundleſs deſires of our Souls, which is impoſſible for any Created Being to do for us; and upon this account it is, that the Love of God ſhou'd be preferable to any Love thou can'ſt have for thy ſelf. God is the firſt great principle of Happineſs, and the end of all

our

our Wiſhes: Our Love muſt therefore begin and terminate in him. The Eſſence of God is Independent from all Created Beings, in as much as he was God happy in himſelf from all Eternity: And ſure this is enough to withdraw thy love from any enjoyments thou can'ſt place in Sublunary Creatures. Thy Actions will bear a reſemblance to the Objects thou art inamour'd with. If they proceed from a true Faith and the Love of God, they are pleaſing in his ſight, and will be accepted by him for Great, however Little ſoever they may appear in the Opinion of the World: But if thou haſt any ſelfiſh ends in thy Service to God, thy Hypocriſy will raiſe his diſpleaſure, and thy beſt Actions be defil'd by that Sordid Love thou had'ſt to thy ſelf in the Performance of them. When our Saviour vouchſafed to viſit *Simon* the Leper, there came unto him a Woman having an Alabaſter-box of very precious Ointment, and pour'd it on his Head as he ſat at Meat. This Action of hers carries with it the appearance of a ſmall Courteſy, conſidering upon whom it was beſtow'd; yet 'twas accepted by our Saviour, becauſe 'twas done with a true Faith, a diſintereſted Love, and a hearty ſorrow for the Sins ſhe had been guilty of. The Sacrifices under the Law were of God's own Appointment, and he was pleas'd to accept of what himſelf had

made part of his own Worſhip; yet *Saul* incurr'd his diſpleaſure, with reſerving part of the Spoil which he had taken from the *Amalekites*, tho' it were to offer it up in Sacrifice to him. And how came ſo good a pretence to be ſo ill accepted? 'Twas becauſe he did not by this approve that Love which he ought to have had for God; for had his Love been real, he wou'd not have dar'd to have gone beyond what he was Commanded, which was to burn whatever he ſhou'd take from the *Amalekites* with Fire: He had a vain Eye to ſomething which he thought would be Meritorious in himſelf, and was for ſerving God after his own way. The Love of God is reſembled to an inward Fire burning in our Hearts; agreeable to that Prayer of the Church; *Deſcend O Holy Spirit, and kindle the Fire of a true Love in the Hearts of thy Faithful People.* Our Love if fired by this Holy Spirit, will like Material Fire make its way upwards, 'twill raiſe our Affections towards God, and not leave them groveling here below: Beſides, the Duty of Self-denial will yet carry us to a higher pitch of Chriſtian Bravery, and teach us to decline and renounce our own Honour. Exceſs of Goodneſs has the only title to an exceſs of Honour; and God alone is Infinitely Good. To ſeek our own Glory ſeperate from his, can never be conſiſtant; and our Saviour's

viour's Reprehenſion of the Phariſees will be as Applicable to us. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another? Look upon that example thy Saviour has ſet thee, and follow him in this caſe, who has often declar'd, That he ſought not his own Honour, nor receiv'd Honour of Men; but that he was Meek and Humble of Heart. All thy Bleſſings thou receiv'ſt from the Hand of God; do thou thankfully return them back to him that gave them. The Fountain of the Divine Goodneſs is the inexhauſted ſource from whence all thy good things flow in upon thee, thro' their ſeveral Channels; they muſt all be refunded back to the Ocean that at firſt ſupply'd the Waters by which they were Convey'd. Flowers that receive their Life and Nouriſhment ftom the kind Influences of the Sun, do as it were by a ſenſible Obſequiouſneſs point to their Great Benefactor; Learn even from theſe to turn thy Acknowledgments to that God whoſe Bleſſings thou enjoy'ſt, and who is the Author of all thoſe Honours with which thou art Honour'd among the Sons of Men; put no Confidence in thy ſelf, nor rely upon thy own ſtrength. If there be any one thing thou haſt from thy ſelf, thou might'ſt then boaſt of it as thy own, and thank thy ſelf for what thy ſelf had acquir'd; but becauſe there is nothing that belongs to thee which

thou can'ſt call thine, but all thou haſt is from God, therefore to him be the Honour and Praiſe of theſe things, and not to thy ſelf. 'Tis this Preſumption of raiſing our ſelves upon our Foundations, that draws us away from a juſt dependance upon God. *Nebuchadnezar* is a ſtanding evidence of this, whoſe bold Preſumption would lead him to ſay, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the Houſe of the Kingdom, by the Might of my Power, and for the Honour of my Majeſty.* But what was the Conſequence of this daring boldneſs of his? *While this word was in the Mouth of the King, there fell a Voice from Heaven,* ſaying, *O Nebuchadnezar to thee it is ſpoken, The Kingdom is departed from thee, and they ſhall drive thee from Men, and thy dwelling ſhall be with the Beaſts of the Field.* This was written for thy Inſtruction, and if thou can'ſt be ſo vain as to think thou can'ſt build ſecurely upon thy own Pride and thine own Honour, and truſt thy Spiritual concerns upon the Merits of thy own Works, and Glory in what thou can'ſt do for thy ſelf without the ſole aſſiſtance of God; thou ſhalt be excluded from his Preſence. The laſt Inſtance of ſelf denial, is to renounce the perverſe Obſtinacy of our own Wills. Our Obedience becomes neceſſary to a Will that always propoſes to us what is moſt for our good; and ſuch is the unchangeable Will

Will of God: We muſt give up our ſelves to the Divine Will from which we have all that we enjoy, and derive from him all the Bleſſings of this Life and the next, and whoſe good Will towards us leads us to Life and Happineſs. 'Tis the Eternal Will of God, That we ſhou'd Live and be for ever Happy. Delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee thy Hearts deſire. The following our own Wills leads us to Death and Deſtruction. What was it ſunk our firſt Parents from the Favour of God and a State of Happineſs into a diſmal proſpect of Eternal Ruin? Having no regard to the Will of God, he gave himſelf up to follow the Dictates of his own: He broke through the Obligation of a Divine Command, and gave an eaſy Ear to the deluding Rhetorick of his great Seducer. Self-denial then is the badge of a true Chriſtian, and our deſires to be Obedient to whatevere is the Will of God, is the true Chriſtian Reſignation of our ſelves to his ſole diſpoſal. Look upon thy Saviour while he lay under the Agonies of his Paſſion, he reſign'd his Will up to his Father, as the moſt grateful Sacrifice he cou'd then offer: And do thou with the ſame entire Submiſſion offer up thine into the ſame hand, and thou ſhalt acquit thy ſelf of that Self-denying Duty, which thy Saviour requires from thee. And may thy Will

O Lord, be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

The Prayer.

O God, thou that art my only Strength, by whoſe Power alone I am ſupported under all Tryals, and enabled to perform the moſt difficult Duties of my Religion; help me in all the Conflicts I am engag'd in with my Sinful and Diſobedient Appetites; let me be ever willing to quit all the Comforts of Life, and undergo the greateſt Hardſhips, rather than out of a Fondneſs to this World and the Enjoyments of it, do any thing contrary to thy Holy Religion. Let not the Conſideration of Pleaſure, or the Fear of Pain, allure or affright me from my Duty, or ſtagger my Faith and Dependance upon thee, my God. Let nothing ever prevail with me to make Shipwrack of my Conſcience, but let me endure the utmoſt Pain and Ignominy of the World with Patience, rather than diſown my Bleſſed Maſter, who ſuffer'd ſo Infamous a Puniſhment for my ſake; and will deny me before thee his Father, if I deny him before Men. Thou haſt not only promis'd to aſſiſt and ſupport me with thy Holy Spirit in the diſcharge of this difficult Duty, but has graciouſly aſſur'd me, that thou wilt reward my Obedience with greater

greater degrees of Eternal Happineſs. And I know, O Bleſſed Jeſu, that thou who requireſt this from me, haſt given me the greateſt example of a Self-denial that was ever practiſed by Humane Nature, and that thou did'ſt it in Pity and Kindneſs to me, and wholly for my Advantage; O do thou ſo carry me through things Temporal, that I finally loſe not the things that are Eternal! Make me ever mindful of that moſt Comfortable Truth, That the Sufferings of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory that ſhall be reveal'd; that Glory in which thou now art at thy Father's Right Hand above, and which thou haſt procur'd for me, O my moſt Merciful Redeemer. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXII.

Of the Soul's true Quiet.

Eſther V. 13.

Yet all this availeth me nothing.

THE Soul is continually ſeeking how ſhe may repoſe her Quiet in the Tranſitory enjoyment of the things of this World, but can find no Foundation where-

on to build her Reſt, and the Reaſon for this her diſappointment, is, That ſhe her ſelf is of a more noble Original than any of thoſe Creatures on which ſhe wou'd rely. 'Tis their Vileneſs, in compariſon to her noble Extraction, that leaves her at a loſs where to Reſt, or be at Peace while ſhe ſeeks to repoſe her ſelf in any thing here below. The enjoyments of this World are always paſſing away and flying from us; but the Nature of the Soul is Immortal: What ſatisfaction then can thoſe things give the Soul, which are ſo much Inferior to it in their Nature? They have all of them a ſtrong reliſh of their Earthly Compoſition, while their Soul is of a Divine Original; How then can the deſires of it be fill'd with an Adequate Satisfaction from things that are in themſelves ſo Defective? After all her weary and vain purſuits, 'tis in Chriſt alone ſhe muſt take her laſt refuge; 'tis he alone that is able to fill the largeſt and moſt extended Capacities of all her wants and deſires: She has the Wounds and Sufferings of her Saviour, for her refuge againſt the Anger of her God; his Almighty Power for her defence againſt the Accuſations of the Devil; the Comforts and Mercy of his Goſpel, againſt the Severity and Terrours of the Law; His Blood that ſpeaks better things than the Blood of *Abel*, againſt the Impeachment of her Sins:

And

And to alleviate the Terrours of Death, ſhe quietly repoſes all her Confidence in the vertue of that Interceſſion which he makes for her at his Father's Right Hand above. And thus our Faith in Chriſt finds proper means to allay and pacify all the diſturbers of our Peace; and our Love above all the other Affections of our Souls finds the higheſt Enjoyment and inward Peace. Vain is that Man's purſuit after Contentment, who thinks to find it in his Love to any of the things with which he Converſes upon Earth; for they have it not in themſelves to give: They can't fully gratify the Soul's craving Appetite after perfect Happineſs, as being all of them Finite in their own Nature; but the Soul of Man being made after the Image of God, is always in an eager purſuit after a Happineſs that is Infinite, in which is comprehended every thing we can call Good. As therefore our Faith muſt not lay any ſtreſs upon the Creatures here below, but on the alone Merit of its Saviour; ſo neither muſt our Love dwell upon them, nor even upon our ſelves. For the Love of our ſelves, will turn the byaſs of our Affections from God, the Love of whom is preferable to that of the whole Creation. Our Soul is the Eſpouſed of our Saviour, ſhe muſt make good the Chaſtity of her Love, by ſuffering him to have ſole Poſſeſſion of her Affections.

Our Soul is the Temple of God in which he vouchſafes to dwell, ſhe muſt therefore be fill'd with his preſence alone, and prepare her ſelf for ſo Divine a Gueſt. Many are for ſeeking their Quiet and Contentment from the greatneſs of their Poſſeſſions; but are diſappointed of their hopes while their truſt in theſe is independant upon Chriſt; for Poverty goes along with our Religion, if not actual, yet at leaſt the Poverty of a Meek and Humble Spirit. Our Saviour had not where to lay his Head, who was Lord of Heaven and Earth; and by this meaneſs of his own Condition, was for recommending a ſtate of Poverty to us, and ſanctifying to us all the hardſhips we undergo under ſuch ſeverities of Life. Riches ſit but looſe upon us, and are at beſt but Foreign and outward enjoyments; while that which muſt give our Souls a true and ſubſtantial Quiet, muſt proceed from within. Now in what ſhall our Souls find a ſure refuge, when they come to be ſeparated from our Bodies, when we muſt leave all our Earthly Poſſeſſions behind us? Our Riches either forſake us, or we them, this is often the Caſe even before we dye; but at our Deaths it never fails to be thus with us: Where then, at ſuch a time as this, ſhall the Soul find its Peace and Contentment? Others place all their Confidence in that

falſe

falſe Peace which the Pleaſures of this Life pretend to give them, and think to ſet up their Standard here, as having found out the only Happineſs of Life: Theſe indeed may be the delights of the Body, and for a while give them ſome tolerable eaſe; but they can never be the true enjoyments of the Soul: Grief and Sorrow are their ſad Attendants and follow them at their heels. Earthly Pleaſures look no farther than to the Continuance of this Life; but the Soul was never made to abide here for ever, or for the ſake of living in this World, for ſhe is forc'd from her abode by Death. How then ſhou'd ſhe find that ſatisfaction which theſe Men Dream of, in Pleaſures that were never made for her, nor ſhe for them? All our ſearches therefore after Happineſs to our Souls without Chriſt are vain: Conſider then what Life that was which he led on Earth; Was it not attended with the higheſt Sorrow and Trouble that was ever felt by Man, even from his Cradle to his Croſs? By this would our Wiſe Judge, who beſt knew the true rate and value of all Sublunary enjoyments, teach us how meanly we ought to think of the Pleaſures of this Life. Others again make their Courtſhip to the Honours and Preferments of the World, and think in them to find that Quiet they have been ſo long in purſuit after; but it muſt

create

create our Pity towards ſuch Men, whoſe quiet is ſo precarious, and ſo eaſily taken from them by the inconſtancy of all popular Applauſe. Honour is but an outward Pageant, and a Happineſs, ſuch as it is, always Changing and upon the Wing; but that which muſt beſtow upon the Soul any laſting Contentment, muſt proceed from our own Breaſts, and we muſt ask our ſelves to be Happy. What more can'ſt thou gain from all the Praiſe and Glory of the World, than what the *Grecian* Painter gave to a Picture of his that met with a general Applauſe? Conſider with thy ſelf what a little Angle of the World thou takeſt up! How ſmall a proportion it bears to the Country thou liveſt in! How much ſmaller if compar'd to the extent of but one fourth part of the Earth! and ſtill to what a point muſt it dwindle if compar'd to the fartheſt extention of the Habitable World! That alone will prove in the end the true and laſting Honour, which ſhall fall to the ſhare of thoſe whom God has elected to Eternal Glory. Every thing in Nature has its proper end to which with a reſtleſs and unſettled motion it continually inclines, 'till it arrives at its proper Centre. The Soul of Man has God for his great End, after whoſe Image ſhe was at firſt made; 'tis impoſſible for her but ſhe muſt be in a reſtleſs and unquiet State, 'till ſhe reſides

reſides in God, the final end of all her Happineſs. The Soul is that vital principle that actuates our Bodies, and God the Life and great ſupporter of our Souls. As therefore that Soul truly Lives, in which God vouchſafes to dwell with the influences of his Divine Grace; ſo by a parity of Reaſon, that Soul is ſpiritually dead and unactive, that has not the preſence of God with her to enliven her to every good Work. And if ſo, What Contentment can there be in ſuch a Spiritual Deadneſs in all the Affections of a Lifeleſs Soul? This firſt Death in our Sins, neceſſarily draws along with it the fatal Conſequence of the ſecond Death to Eternal Damnation. He therefore that firmly Loves and places all his Confidence in God, and is bleſs'd with the inward Comfort of having God's Preſence with him, by the Operations of his Grace upon his Soul, is not to be ſhock'd in his Repoſe by any of thoſe diſaſters we call the outward Evils of Life: He is Chearful under Diſtreſſes; Rich while he's Poor; ſafe under all the Commotions of the Age he lives in; and ſecurely rides out all the Storms of a Troubled World: He is eaſy when Revil'd, has recourſe to the Innocency of his own Breaſt; and when he comes to die, has ſuch a lively Faith that Death it ſelf is not able to take from him. He ſlights all the Threats of Tyranny, having

ving the Riches of Divine Comforts to ſupport his Spirits under the ſevereſt Perſecutions; He's not to be caſt down by Adverſity, having the Comforter with him who is able to diſpel all his Troubles; Poverty raiſes no anxious Thoughts to diſcompoſe the Tranquility of his Mind, having the treaſury of the Divine Goodneſs as an unexhauſted Fund for all his wants; the Calumnies of the World againſt him give him no diſturbance, having the inward pleaſure of knowing that he is honour'd of God; the Pleaſures of Senſe make no impreſſion, having his Soul fill'd with the more grateful Tranſports of the Divine Spirit; he's regardleſs of the Friendſhips of the World, having the pleaſure of knowing that God is his beſt Friend, and always ready to ſtand by him; he gapes not after the Riches that are upon Earth, having the greateſt Treaſures laid up for him in the Heavens; he's not afraid to dye, becauſe he alone commits his Life into the Hands of God in whom he lives; Worldly Wiſdom has but a ſmall ſhare of his deſires, having the Wiſdom of God for his inward Guide and wiſeſt Inſtructor, whoſe perfect Knowledge, ſurpaſſes all the Imperfect Science of Man; he is not ſtartled at the moſt terrible Productions of Nature, not being afraid of Thunder nor Earthquakes, is Calm in the midſt of Storms,

Fires,

Fires, and Inundations, the ſad preſagings of Comets, and the Eclipſes of Sun and Moon, which create ſuch dreadful Apprehenſions to the World, being rais'd above the utmoſt Power of Nature to do him harm; he Repoſes all his Faith in Chriſt, and lives ſecurely under the protection of his Saviour; he's not to be led away with the Flatteries of a deceitful World, having a much ſweeter Voice within him calling him to his Duty, that of his Saviour; he has no reaſon to fear the Devil's Power, having a thorough Senſe of God's Mercy towards him. He by whom he lives, and by whoſe Strength he Conquers, is ſtronger on his ſide, than all the buſy Stratagems of the Devil to ſubdue him are, or can be againſt him. He follows not the allurements of the Fleſh, having a true reliſh of thoſe Spiritual delights which flow from a Life of Piety, and being quickned by the Spirit mortifies the Fleſh, and offers up his Affections in Sacrifice to him; he's not afraid of whatever Accuſation his Great Adverſary has to put in againſt him, knowing that he has Chriſt ſo powerful an Interceſſor with his Father for him: This is that true Quiet of our Souls, which it is the Will of the ſole Author and Giver of it to beſtow upon us, even our Lord himſelf, God Bleſſed for ever.

The Prayer.

ALmighty God, who art the only and Supreme Happineſs of the Soul of Man, without the enjoyment of whom ſhe muſt ever dwell in Diſquietude and Trouble; fix all the Thoughts and Affections of my Soul upon thee, who alone can'ſt ſatisfy all her deſires, and give her a Peace that paſſeth all Underſtanding. I have ſufficiently experienc'd the Incapacity of all Earthly enjoyments to make me Happy, and the deſires of my Soul after them, return back into my Breaſt, empty or diſſatisfied at thoſe many diſappointments they have met with, and are ſtill craving ſomething beyond all the Pleaſures of this Life, to fill my Appetites with a Perfect Satisfaction. Nothing but thee, and the enjoyment of thee, is able to do this. O let my Thoughts, my Deſires, and all the Affections of my Soul, meet with unſpeakable ſatisfaction in thee, the only Author and Fountain of Happineſs; let them ſoar above the ſordid and empty Pleaſures of this World, and wing my Soul in its flight upwards to that perfect State of Bliſs, where thou ſhalt Communicate thy ſelf to her in ſuch meaſures of thy Spirit, that ſhe ſhall have nothing more to Deſire, nothing to diſappoint her Appetites, nothing to make her

her Uneaſy; but thou ſhalt be All in all, and the ſight of thee and thy Glory be her Great and Endleſs Happineſs to all Eternity. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXIII.

Of a Pure Conſcience.

Acts XXIV. 16.

And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of offence, toward God, and toward Men.

IN every thing thou do'ſt, pay a ſtrict regard to thy own Conſcience. Whatever Sin it is the Devil prompts thee to the Commiſſion of, ſtand in awe of that impartial Judgment that will paſs upon thee for it in thy own Breaſt. If thou art afraid to Sin openly, and in the ſight of Men, How much more ſhou'd the checks of thy own Conſcience, reclaim thee from ſuch an Act? The Evidence given againſt thee within, is of more efficacy and force, than that of any outward Court of Judicature. Thou may'ſt perhaps eſcape the Cognizance of an earthly Tribunal for thy Sins; but thou can'ſt never fly from the Charge which thy own Con-

Conſcience will bring againſt thee. This will be one of thoſe Books which St. *John* tells us ſhall be open'd at the Day of Judgment: The firſt will be that of the Divine Omniſcience, in which all the Actions of Men, without any exception, their Words and very Thoughts, will appear openly in the cleareſt Light. The next will be Chriſt himſelf, who is the Book of Life: He who ſhall be found regiſtred in this, under the Head of Faith, ſhall be conducted by Angels into the immediate Preſence of God. Then ſhall the Scriptures be laid open, by the Rule of which our Faith and Works ſhall at that Day be tried: *The Word which I ſpeak ſhall Judge you*, ſays our Saviour, *in the Latter Day*. Then ſhall follow the Roll, which contains the Evidences of our Charity towards the Poor and Indigent, who ſhall attend and receive us into everlaſting Habitations. The laſt Book that ſhall be diſplay'd, will be that of the Teſtimony of our own Conſciences, in which all our Sins will be fairly written: A large Volume this, in which all things are engraven with the Pen of Truth: The Condemn'd ſhall not be able to diſpute their Sins at that Day, for they ſhall have the inward Teſtimony and Conviction of their Conſciences: They ſhall not be able to evade the Accuſation of their Sins, for they carry about them the inward

ward Tribunal, and the Witneſſes againſt them, ſhall be thoſe of their own Houſe. A pure Conſcience repreſents the Soul in its trueſt Light, and gives her the cleareſt Repreſentation of her ſelf; nor are the Eyes of a contaminated Conſcience, able to look up againſt the brightneſs of a Pure God: Upon this Account was that ſaying of our Saviour, *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.* A pure Conſcience is as pleaſing and acceptable in his ſight, as a Beautiful Object is in the Eyes of Men; but a Corrupted one breeds thoſe never-dying Worms, that ſhall gnaw and prey upon it for ever. This Worm that eats into our Conſciences, 'tis our Duty to cruſh, and to be uneaſy under the Stings of it, leaſt we cheriſh that within us which will ſtick to us for ever. The great Deſign of all that has been written in the World, is but one Comment upon the Text in our own Conſciences. What will the utmoſt knowledge we can be Maſters of avail us, if attended with an impure Conſcience? When we come to appear before the Throne of God, we ſhall not be judg'd by the extent of our Learning, and how much we knew, but according to the Deviations we have made from the Rule of our own Conſciences. If thou wou'dſt preſerve the Copy of it entire and correct, thou muſt tranſcribe from the

Origi-

Original of thy Saviour, who is the Book of Life: The Profeſſion of thy Faith muſt be conformable to the Doctrine he has taught thee; and the Conduct of thy Life, be agreeable to the great Exemplar of his. A good Conſcience will diſcover it ſelf, by the Purity of thy Heart, by the Truth of thy Words, and the Simplicity of thy Actions. Let this be the Light to direct thy Steps, in every thing thou do'ſt, for it will impartially ſhow thee how to diſtinguiſh between what's good and what is evil. Be afraid thou doſt not bring thy ſelf before that Bar of thy own Conſcience, at which thou muſt ſtand to anſwer for thy Gilt, which thou know'ſt thou haſt contracted, and at the ſame time be thy own Proſecutor, thy ſelf be a Witneſs againſt thy ſelf, and thy own Judge, and laſh thy uneaſy Mind with Scorpions of thy own procuring, and be the Executioner of thy own Sentence. What poſſible Evaſion wilt thou find to reſpite thy own Judgment, when thy own accuſing Conſcience comes in as a Witneſs againſt thee, and nothing can eſcape the knowledge of this thy Judge? What will it avail thee if the whole World have an Opinion of thy Innocence, if thy better knowing Conſcience at the ſame time accuſe thee? And on the other hand, what Injury can all the falſe Detractions of a Malicious

licious World do thee, if thou haſt only the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience for thy defence? This is the only Judge in every Man's Breaſt, able to accuſe, to acquit, or to condemn him. A Judge of the greateſt Impartiality, not to be mov'd by our Intreaties, nor to be corrupted to a falſe Judgment by the greateſt Bribes we have to offer. Where-ever thou ſhift'ſt thy Habitation, and in what part ſoever of the World thou remain'ſt, thou haſt always thy Conſcience waiting on thee, bearing in thy Mind whatever thou haſt entruſted with it, whither it be good, or whither it be evil: She faithfully keeps for thee in thy Life, whatever thou haſt given her in Charge, and when thou com'ſt to die, delivers it up to carry with thee into another World. Thus truly a Man's Enemies are thoſe of his own Houſe, and of his own Family, where he finds his Accuſers, that he has Spies ſet over him, and the Tormentors of his Quiet. What Profit can a Life of Affluence and Plenty bring to that Man, who lies continually under the Laſhes of an Evil Conſcience? All the Happineſs or Miſery of Man, is ſeated in the Mind: What Eaſe wou'd it give to a Poor Wretch under the ſcorchings of a Feaver, to be laid in a Bed of Gold? What Comfort can all the outward Felicity in the World amaſs'd toge-

together, give to one under the Stinging Remorſes of a guilty Conſcience? Oh then as we value the Salvation of our Souls, let us endeavour to keep our Conſciences pure and undefil'd? If we part with this, we muſt part with our Faith; and our Faith once gone, we ſhall loſe God's Grace upon our Hearts, and what hopes can ſuch Graceleſs Wretches have of being ſav'd? Such as the Teſtimony of thy own Conſcience within thee is, ſuch may'ſt thou expect will be the final Judgment that ſhall paſs upon thee. Sinners need no one to accuſe them, nor the Ceremony of a formal Evidence, they themſelves ſhall be their own Accuſers. The gorg'd Drunkard, while one Glaſs choaks another, not ſenſible of any preſent Inconvenience from his Exceſs, but when awaken'd in the Morning, feels the nauſeous and indigeſted Fumes riſing in his uneaſy Breaſt, gives us ſome reſemblance of our Sins, while they are ſtealing upon us, and at laſt overpower us, they darken our Minds, and caſt a pitchy Cloud before the Clearneſs of our Judgments; till our Conſciences awakens, and rouſes with us, and cuts deeper gaſhes in our diſturb'd Thoughts, than the utmoſt Accuſation of Man. There are Three Tribunals, that of the World, that in thy own Breaſt, and that at the final Judgment of God; as thou canſt not eſcape the latter, ſo neither

neither canſt thou run from that of thy ſelf, however thou may'ſt make ſhift to avoid that of the World. No Walls ſo thick, nor Bars ſo ſtrong, as to keep out thy Conſcience from being a Witneſs to whatever thou do'ſt: What Excuſe will be able to bring thee off, while there is a ſecret Whiſper within, that tells thee thou art guilty? Peace of Conſcience, is a fore-taſte of that Eternal Tranquility of Mind we are to enjoy hereafter. Thou ſhalt find more true Reaſon to Rejoice, and receive more ſubſtantial Comforts from the Suffrage of a good Conſcience, amidſt all the Straits and Hardſhips of Life, than from an evil one, attended with all the Delicacies the World can give. When loaded with all the unjuſt Calumny Malice it ſelf can raiſe againſt thee, thou may'ſt confidently alledge the Innocency of thy Conſcience that acquits thee from deſerving it. Lay thy Hand upon thy own Breaſt, and ask what that ſays concerning thee; for thou art better known there than by the World. What will the falſe Flatteries of Men avail thee at the Publick Day of Judgment? Or what hurt will their malicious Tongues do thee at that Day? Thou ſhalt then ſtand or fall by the Judgment of God alone, and of thy ſelf, not by the Opinion the World had of thee. Thy Conſcience ſhall be as Immortal as thy Soul; and Infernal Puniſhments

ſhall

ſhall lye heavy upon the Damn'd, as long as the guilty Reflections of their Conſciences ſhall laſt. Material Fire does not ſo ſenſibly affect the Body, as the inward Flames of Guilt diſtract the Soul: The Soul ſhall dwell for ever amidſt the Flames of an unquenchable Fire, and the Stings of Conſcience ſhall rack its Thoughts for ever. Rods of Iron cut not ſo deep into the Fleſh, as the inward Laſhes of a guilty Conſcience ſink into the Soul. O then fly from the guilt of Sin, that thou may'ſt eſcape the torturing Rack of thy own Conſcience! Blot out the black and diſmal Roll of thy paſt Offences written in thy Conſcience, by a true and ſincere Repentance, that they mayn't be read againſt thee in the Day of Judgment, and thou with horrour hear the amazing Voice of God pronouncing thy Eternal Sentence. Let the Flames of thy Devotion burn the guilty Worm within thee to Aſhes, that the Venom of it may not canker and enflame thy Soul with an Eternal Horrour. Let thy Tears run down in Floods, to quench the parching heat that is within thee, that thou may'ſt taſte the cooling and refreſhing Springs of thoſe Delights that will be ever flowing in upon thee. And do thou, O Lord, grant that we may fight a good Fight, keeping the Faith and a good Conſcience, and at length

arrive

arrive ſafe and unhurt to that Kingdom thou haſt prepar'd for us in the Heavens.

The Prayer.

O GOD, who haſt implanted in the Soul of Man, a Conſcience, which being rightly inform'd according to thy Will, is to be a guide to his Actions, and will teach him to diſtinguiſh between good and evil; let me never through the hardneſs of my Heart, or an habitual Courſe of Sin, extinguiſh this ſacred Light within me, nor ſilence the kind Reproofs of ſo faithful a Monitor. O Let me keep it ever tender, by the ſtrict performance of every thing thou haſt made my Duty, that when at any time through the weakneſs of my Nature, or the prevailing Power of Temptations too ſtrong for me, I ſhall err from thy Commandments, my Conſcience may reprove me, and thy Grace enable me to recover my ſelf again by a true Repentance. And O that I may ever keep it void of offence towards thee and towards all Men, then ſhall not the Calumnies nor Sufferings I meet with from the World, give my eaſy Breaſt any diſturbance; but from all the Cenſures of Man will I appeal to thee, to thee, who only know'ſt my Innocency, and

wilt give me the comfortable acquittance of my own Conſcience here, and a publick Vindication of my Soul before Men and Angels at the Great Day. Which unſpeakable Comfort do thou grant me, O God of Mercy, for thy Mercy's ſake. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Of the Love of true Humility.

1 Pet. V. 5.

Be cloathed with Humility; for God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.

REaſon with thy ſelf, O my Soul, upon the poor and abject State of Man, and thou wilt eaſily conquer any Temptations thou may'ſt have to Pride. How meanly does he come into the World? What Miſeries does he meet with in his Paſſage through it? And with what ſorrow does he at laſt leave it? He has the Powers of Hell to contend with, he is on all ſides attack'd with Temptations, courted by Pleaſures, dejected under Sufferings, involv'd in Sins, robb'd of his Vertues, and faſt bound to the powerful force of corrupt and vicious Habits. Conſider

ſider this, and what little Reaſon haſt thou, whoſe Compoſition is Duſt and Aſhes, to carry thy ſelf with a ſtiff Neck? What wer't thou before thou waſt form'd in the Womb, but putrid Excrement? What canſt thou call thy ſelf whilſt thou liveſt, but a Bagg of Skin ſtuft with Clay? And what ſhall this Proud Body of thine be when laid in the Grave, but a Feaſt for Worms? If there be any thing in thee thou canſt call good, 'tis not thine, but God's; thou haſt a Title to nothing but thy Sins, and nothing but theſe canſt thou challenge for thy own: It argues Folly and Diſhoneſty in a Servant, to value himſelf upon what's his Maſter's. Caſt thy Eye, Proud Man, upon the Example of thy Saviour; all the Glory of Heaven was at his Command, nay, he was Glory it ſelf, and yet deſpiſed and contemn'd all the Honours of the World, and calls ſtill upon thee to follow him in this his Humility: *Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart.* He is the true and loving Diſciple of his Saviour, who has Bravery enough to follow him in all his ſelf-denying Vertues; he who has any value for him, will have the ſame for his Humility. Let the Servant bluſh and be confounded to carry his Head ſo high, when the Lord of Heaven and Earth ſtoop'd ſo low.

Our Bleſſed Saviour compares himſelf to the Lilly of the Vallies, to intimate to us, that himſelf, the nobleſt of Flowers, grows not, nor is preſerv'd upon the top of Mountains, in proud and elated Hearts, but in the lowly Vallies, in the contrite and humble Spirits of the Righteous. Wherefore 'tis the ſaying of a Holy Man, That an humble Soul, is truly the Seat and Repoſe of Chriſt, in which he delights to dwell. The Grace of God feeds not the greatneſs of Man, but humbles his aſpiring Thoughts, and therefore Pride argues a want of it, in the Man who walks not in the ways of an humble Soul. The Streams of Divine Grace, like the Rivers of the Earth, make their way naturally into the Receſſes of an humble Heart, but run not up Precipices to meet the Proud. *The Lord*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *dwelleth on high, and yet humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth.* This is truly ſtrange, that we ſhou'd have no other way of acceſs to God, the higheſt of all Beings, but by Humility, the lowlieſt of all Vertues. He who has a mean Opinion of himſelf, is great in the eſteem of God; and the ſelf-denial he practices upon himſelf, is pleaſing in his ſight. God form'd the World out of Nothing, and peals with Man in the renewing of his Mind,

Mind, as he did with the empty and ſhapeleſs *Void*; he ſhow'd his Power of Creation, by ſpeaking a World into Form, without any previous Matter to work on; and he renews our Minds, when there is nothing of Conceit in our ſelves, nor Pride to puff us up. That therefore thou may'ſt be a proper Subject for the renewing Spirit of God, thou muſt be nothing in thy own Eyes, thou muſt not aſcribe or arrogate any thing to thy ſelf. We are all of us ſubject to Weakneſs and Infirmities; but think no Man more ſubject to them than thy ſelf. 'Twill do thee no harm, if thou judgeſt thy ſelf lower than all the Sons of Men, and by thy Humility doſt rank thy ſelf the laſt of all the Liſt; but it may be much to thy diſadvantage, if thy Pride ſhall lead thee to take place of but one thou think'ſt meaner than thy ſelf. The Four and Twenty Elders, who repreſent the Church Triumphant, caſt down their Crowns before the Throne, and give all Bleſſing and Glory to God: What then ought not ſinful Man to do? The Seraphims vail their Faces before him: What ought not Man, vile Man to do, who has ſo many ways prov'd ungrateful to his Maker? Chriſt the true and only begotten Son of God, out of an aſtoniſhing Humility came down from Heaven, took upon him

the Infirmities of our Nature, condeſcended to our Fleſh, to Death, even to the Croſs. What Humility ſhou'd not Man ſhow, who by his Sins was at ſo vaſt a diſtance from his God? See, O my Soul, with what an amazing Humility thy Saviour has given a damp to all Humane Pride: And canſt thou have the leaſt Inclination to be Proud? Chriſt enter'd into his Glory through many Tribulations and bitter Sufferings: And doſt thou think ever to follow him, whilſt thou ſtalk'ſt on in the way of Pride? 'Twas this that caſt the Devil himſelf out of Heaven: And doſt thou, who haſt never been there, endeavour to enter by the ſame Pride that tumbled him down headlong? *Adam*, for his Pride was baniſh'd Paradiſe: And haſt thou any Thoughts to arrive at that Paradiſe that is above, by following his Example? No, let us rather chuſe to be Servants too, and waſh one anothers Feet, as our Saviour did; than with the fall'n Angels go about to raiſe our ſelves above God. Let us humble our ſelves here, that we may be exalted hereafter. Let the Thoughts, O my Soul, of what thou haſt not and ſtill wanteſt, humble thee, when compar'd to what little thou haſt. Let it be rather cauſe of Grief to thee, that there are ſo many Vertues thou art a Stranger

Stranger to, than be proud of thoſe thou art in poſſeſſion of. Caſt a modeſt Vail over thy Vertues, and be not aſham'd to own thy Sins; for thou wilt have great reaſon to fear, leſt if thou vainly expoſe the Riches of thy Vertues, thou even tempt the Devil to make thee proud, and cheat thee of the greateſt part of them. Charity, like Embers in the Aſhes, is beſt preſerv'd and kept alive by being ſtifled and buried in the modeſt concealment of Humility. Pride is the fruitful Parent of all our Sins; beware therefore how thou ſtand'ſt upon the Pinnacles of Greatneſs, leſt thou fall headlong into an Abyſs of Sin. A proud Heart is a grateful receſs for the Father of Pride; be jealous therefore of all worldly Grandeur, leaſt thy Soul be brought under the wretched ſlavery of a proud Spirit. Pride's an inward parching Wind, that dries up the Fountain of Divine Grace; be afraid therefore how thou art puff'd up with the Thoughts of thy ſelf, leſt thou happen to be excluded from the Bleſſings of the Divine Spirit. And do thou, O Jeſu, be thy ſelf an effectual Remedy to our elated Minds; let thy Humility be our Merit, and the Example for us to follow; let our Faith make us in love with thy lowlineſs of Mind, and in our Lives conſtantly tread in thy humble Steps.

The Prayer.

O Bleſſed Jeſu, thou great Pattern of Humility, who to enforce this moſt amiable Vertue upon thy Followers, waſt in thy Life and Sufferings all Love and Condeſcenſion. Let thy Meek Example quaſh the leaſt eruptions of Pride and Vanity in my Soul; and ſince thou my Saviour, the Son of God, waſt contented to make thy ſelf of no Reputation for my ſake, let me, for thine, eſteem my ſelf as nothing, and ſubmit to the meaneſt Offices of Charity, whereby I may ſhow how deſirous I am of being a true Diſciple of ſo humble a Maſter. Humility was in thee a tranſcendent Vertue, for thou waſt the Son of God; but in me, who have nothing that I can be proud of, a miſerable Man, and ſinful Duſt and Aſhes, 'twou'd ſcarce be a Vertue, but that thou haſt commanded it, and know'ſt how apt vile Man is to grow proud, and to think more highly of himſelf than he ought to think. O let thy Grace teach me to think of my ſelf no more than I deſerve, that my Nature is Corrupted, that my Life is Vanity, and that I am a wretched Sinner in the ſight of God; let this, for this is enough, ſuppreſs all proud and vain Thoughts within

within me: But let thy Humility, thy Meekneſs and Lowlineſs of Heart, be the moſt effectual Cure for all Elations of my Mind, and in theſe let me be exalted from the loweſt pitch of Humility here, to that higheſt of thy Glory, in which thou art now at thy Father's Right-hand above, O Holy and Eternal Jeſus. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXV.

Of avoiding Covetouſneſs.

1 Tim. VI. 10.

The Love of Money is the root of all Evil, which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows.

OUR abhorrence of Covetouſneſs ought to be as great, as the Salvation of our Souls is precious. There is no ſuch Poverty as that the Covetous Man feels, even in the midſt of Plenty; for his hoarded Baggs lie as uſeleſs by him, as his empty ones. He muſt needs be the moſt uneaſy Man living, who having no Charity for others, is the moſt ill-natur'd Wretch to himſelf. Pride firſt leads us

into Sin, and Covetouſneſs improving upon that Stock, is the Root of all Evil; the one draws us away from God, and the other ſettles our Affections upon the Creature. Riches have their Toils in the Acquiſition of them, create us Fears in the poſſeſſion, and the moſt unfeign'd Grief to our Minds, when we chance to loſe them; and what is worſe than all this, the Pains and Labours of the Covetous will not only periſh, but carry with them ſomething fatal in their Nature; Riches will either leave thee, or thou muſt one Day leave them. If therefore thy Hopes be plac'd in theſe, Where ſhall that Hope be when thou com'ſt to die? How wilt thou truſt thy Soul in the Hands of God, when thou hadſt not Faith enough to truſt his Providence with the diſpoſal of thy Body? Thou art the Care of an Almighty God, Why do'ſt thou then diſpute his Ability to ſuſtain thee? Thou haſt infinite Wiſdom to look after thy Affairs, Why art thou ſollicitous by what Means thou ſhalt be maintain'd? Thou haſt a God of the greateſt Bounty, to ſupply thy Wants, Why then do'ſt thou miſtruſt his Will to feed thee? Thou haſt it under the Hand and Seal of thy Saviour, who is Lord of all things, both in Heaven and Earth, that nothing which is needful

needful for Man ſhall be with-holden from thoſe that ſeek the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs. Put thy Confidence in this Promiſe of his; Truth himſelf will never fail thee. Covetouſneſs is the groſſeſt of Idolatry, which places a Golden Idol in the room of God, and turns that Confidence and Truſt which is only due to the Supreme Being, to thoſe things which himſelf had made. Whatever we love more than God, we give it, by our eſteem, a Preference to him; and whatever we prefer before him, is a God of our own making. *Eſau* ſold the Privilege of his Birth-right for one ſingle Meal, to ſatisfie his hunger; and there are many who make as fooliſh a Bargain, and barter away their Title and Heirſhip to a Kingdom prepar'd for them in the Heavens, for the preſent Enjoyments of a tranſitory Good. Thirty Pieces of Silver was the mean and accurſed Price of *Judas's* Treachery for betraying the Son of God; and to as low a Market do the Covetous expoſe his Grace to ſale, for Riches that are only temporal. What Tendency can that Man have towards Heaven, who is contented to feed continually upon Husks with Swine? What Progreſs can he make towards God, by the Affections of an elevated Heart, who is contriving how to fix the Contentment of his Soul in the greatneſs of his Poſſeſſions?

Riches

Riches are like Thorns, ſays our Saviour, Thorns that are inſeparable from our inordinate love of them; Thorns that choak the growth of the good Seed ſown in our Hearts, and create thoſe anxious Cares that render the Operations of the Spirit ineffectual; Thorns that prick and goad the Mind with piercing and uneaſy Diſquietudes. Thou thy ſelf muſt die, and all the Wealth thou do'ſt amaſs muſt periſh with thee. Theſe Hoarding Miſers, are like thoſe ſtingy Retainers of Corn, who make their Granaries under ground, in the moiſt and rancid mold of the Earth, not conſidering the Moiſture it contracts, and that 'twill corrupt and rot. What folly is it for Men to place the utmoſt of their Deſires in Wealth and Riches! How can any Corporeal Being ever be able to ſatisfie the Deſires of a Soul, which is Spiritual in its Nature, when rather by its own peculiar Excellency it ſwallows up theſe Corporeal Enjoyments, and ſo as to be ſtill boundleſs in its Deſires? 'Twas made at firſt for an Eternity; 'tis doing wrong to its Immortal Nature, to confine its Deſires to any thing that is tranſient and momentary. The higher ſhe takes her flight towards God, the farther ſhe withdraws from the Riches of the World, and leaves the Love of them behind her. Even Animals

mals themſelves, the nearer they live to the upper Regions of the Air, the leſs regard they have to thoſe things that are beneath them. *The Fowls of the Air*, for inſtance, *neither ſow nor reap, nor do they gather into Barns*; and 'tis a certain ſign the Affections of our Souls are ſet upon things above, when they ſlight and contemn the things that are below. The Vermin and Inſects of the Earth prog and hoard for themſelves, and this is agreeable to that low and ignoble Condition of their Natures, in which they are inferior to the Birds. An inordinate love for the Riches of the World, will diſcover what averſion from God there is in our Souls, and how faſt bound we are to the Dirt of the Earth. God has given thee a Soul, and canſt not thou truſt him with thy Body? He feeds the very Birds, and do'ſt thou who art made after his own Image, diſpute with thy ſelf whither he will provide for thee? He Cloaths the Lillies of the Field, and do'ſt thou fear to be left naked by him? Let Man bluſh and be aſham'd that Religion and Reaſon ſhou'd not be able to beget ſuch a Dependance upon God which natural Inſtinct only effects in Birds: They neither ſow nor reap, but leave the Care of their little Carcaſſes to him that made them; but the Covetous will not take God's Word

for

for their Proviſion, till they have firſt taken care how to provide for themſelves. The ſordid Miſer is one of the unjuſteſt Men living: And why? Becauſe having brought nothing into the World along with him, he's as ſollicitous about his earthly Mammon, as if he were for carrying it to his Grave. He's ungrateful in the higheſt; for he enjoys the many Bleſſings of God, and yet his Heart miſtruſts the Hand from which he at firſt receiv'd them. He's ſtrangely fooliſh, to relinquiſh his purſuit after a real Good, without which nothing elſe can be truly call'd ſo, and turn Slave to that which can never make him happy without the Bleſſing of God going along with it. While he's bound over by a ſordid love to the things of the Earth, he is not properly to be call'd Maſter of them, but they of him. So unſatiable is Avarice, that neither Plenty nor Want can quench its greedy Thirſt: The keenneſs of its Edge is not abated by Want; for by a long diſappointment of its Deſires, its Appetite grows more intenſe. Plenty on the other ſide makes no abatement; for the more the Covetous Man enjoys, the more he ſtill deſires; every new encreaſe fires him with a freſh purſuit, and is like fewel heap'd upon thoſe inward Flames, which burn the more, and reduce that which feeds them

them into uſeleſs Aſhes. It at firſt ſteals leaſurely upon us, but ſoon like a Torrent breaks its Banks, and ſwells us into a Dropſy; and the more we drink the more we thirſt: Set therefore Bounds to this encroaching Luſt after Riches, leſt it draw thee on to an eternal Ruin. Many greedily ſwallow down in this Life, what will ſet uneaſy upon their Conſciences in the next, and be forc'd, when rack'd with inward Tortures, to vomit up again: And others go out of the World with this unquenchable Thirſt upon their Souls, and have met Death in their way, while they have been extending their proſpect of a future Gain. Let the Thoughts of theſe things, O devout Soul, make thee keep as far as poſſible thou can'ſt from an Avaritious Spirit: Thou ſhalt carry none of thy Poſſeſſions along with thee to Judgment, except thou leav'ſt behind thee thoſe uncertain Riches that will periſh of themſelves, in acts of Charity to the Poor, for whom the Son of God himſelf diſdain'd not to die. Diſtribute to the Neceſſities of the Poor, that thou may'ſt by this means become charitable to thy ſelf: Whatever is not laid out upon them, will fall into the Hands of Strangers. He's too unreaſonable in his Deſires, who thinks not God ſufficient for all his Wants. That Man's Hopes after

Heaven

Heaven is much to be diſputed, who can ſet ſo high a Value upon the good things of this Life. How ſhall he arrive to that pitch of Chriſtian Bravery, as to lay down his Life for his Brother, who denies him his Temporal ſubſtance, when he begs it of him? The Poor Man's Hand is the Repoſitory of Heaven what that receives from us, it keeps ſafe for us till we come thither, that it mayn't dwindle, nor be ſquander'd away by us upon Earth. Wou'dſt thou do that which thy Saviour may take well at thy Hands? Show thy Bounty then to him that ſtands in need of it. He who is our Head, is pleas'd to accept our Charity to the Members of his Body, as if done to himſelf; Chriſt calls upon thee in this only, to return him what he at firſt gave thee; do good with the good things he has given thee, that thou may'ſt draw down his Bleſſings upon thee; be liberal of thy ſubſtance, that by this means thou may'ſt preſerve it; for to be too penurious in the retaining it, is the ready way to loſe it. Harken to the Advice of thy Saviour, leſt thou be forc'd to hear him pronounce that diſmal Sentence againſt ſuch griping Wretches, *Go ye Curſed into everlaſting Fire; for when I was an hungred, ye gave me no Meat; when I was thirſty, ye gave me no drink; I was a Stranger,*

and

and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloth'd me not; ſick and in Priſon, and ye viſited me not. Alms is like Seed, the more ſparing or liberal we are of it, the greater proportionably will be our Harveſt. If thou wou'dſt be found among thy Saviour's Flock, do all the good thou can'ſt to thoſe who are of the ſame Fold with thee. Let the Goats on his Left-hand, plac'd there, not that they had robb'd or ſpoil'd the Poor, but for not charitably feeding them, make thee afraid of a Negative Goodneſs. Do thou, O God, encline our Hearts unto thy Teſtimonies, and not unto Covetouſneſs.

The Prayer.

O God, thou great and unexhauſted Fountain of Goodneſs and Charity, who giveſt liberally to all, and upbraideſt not, endue me with a largeneſs of Soul, ready to the utmoſt of thoſe Abilities which I have receiv'd from thee, to deſtribute to the neceſſity of the Saints, and by the Acts of a generous and diffuſive Goodneſs, tranſmit my Riches into that never failing Bank in Heaven, where I ſhall receive them again with unſpeakable Intereſt. The greateſt and only Treaſure I have here, is my Immortal Soul; O let it be my greateſt and only Care to improve it with thoſe Vertues

tues and Divine Graces thou art pleas'd to beſtow upon me. Let me, in the midſt of my purſuit after temporal Things, and the manifold concerns of this World, ſeriouſly and often expoſtulate with my ſelf in thoſe weighty and important Words of my Saviour: *What ſhall it profit me to gain the whole World, and loſe my own Soul*; or of what Value are all the Treaſures of it, to give in exchange for my Soul? Let thy Grace, O God, teach me to proportion my Care and Concern anſwerable to the Value of a momentary World, and an immortal Soul; never let me be guilty of ſuch a ſlaviſh Folly, as to amaſs together ſuch Heaps of Riches, as if I had thoughts to live here for ever; or were deſign'd to carry them with me into another World. Nor let any falſe Pretences of ſecuring my ſelf from a diſtant Poverty, an uncertain old Age, or Fears of unforeſeen Accidents, betray me into Covetouſneſs. Be thou my only Riches; let my Faith, and Dependance upon thy Providence, ſecure me from all miſtruſtful Thoughts of my future Proviſion; and if I ſeek thy Kingdom, and the Righteouſneſs thereof, I doubt not but that all other Things ſhall be added unto me, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

MEDI-

MEDITATION XXXVI.

Concerning the Properties of a true Charity.

1 Tim. VI. 17, 18.

Charge them that are Rich in this World, that that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain Riches; but in the Living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good Works; ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.

A True and undiſſembled Charity is the inſeparable Property of a good Man. 'Tis Faith conſtitutes the Chriſtian, and Charity his Faith; where the Works of the one ſhine not before Men, there is neither Life nor Vigour in the other. You may as ſoon diſmantle the Sun of its Light, as a true Faith of that Charity, which is the Overt Act whereby a Chriſtian diſcovers the Influence his Belief has upon his Life. As the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without Works is dead alſo. He who is not of the ſame Spirit with Chriſt, is none of his Diſciple; and where the ſame charitable Diſpoſition which he

he had is wanting, there is a Barrenneſs of thoſe Fruits which the Bleſſed Spirit wou'd produce: There is no Judgment to be made of the Tree, but by the goodneſs of its product. Charity is the Animal Spirit that diffuſing it ſelf through all the Members of that Myſtical Body which is made up of true Chriſtians, unites them in one Bond to become loving and charitable to one another. The good Chriſtian has a Spirit of Charity within him, and ſhows the power of it by all outward Acts of Love and doing good, which are an Ornament both to his Soul and Perſon: Let Charity then encline thy Heart to pity and compaſſion, and the ſame Divine Grace direct thy Hand in its Bounty. 'Tis not enough that thou feel a Pity riſing in thy Soul towards thy Brother in diſtreſs, if at the ſame time thou with-hold'ſt thy Hand from him: Nor will the Charity of thy Hand be accepted, where that of thy Heart goes not along with it. The Faithful Chriſtian receives all he has at the Hand of God, and his Charity does as readily lay it out upon his Neighbour: 'Tis Faith by which we partake of the Divine Nature; for God is Love: 'Twill be difficult for us therefore to perſwade any Man that Faith is the inward Principle that governs our Actions, when our Charity gives the World no

aſſu-

aſſurance of ſuch a Government our Faith has over us. To believe in Chriſt, is to love him; and to love him as we ought, is to love our Neighbour alſo The Uncharitable Man has no perfect Notion of the Mercy of his Saviour toward him, nor that hearty truſt he ought to repoſe in him, who denies thoſe Offices of Charity which he has made his Duty. 'Tis Faith, and a Charity ariſing from that Faith, that renders all our Works good and acceptable. Love is the prolifick principle of all our Vertues; it gives the Soul a ſpiritual reliſh of all the Bleſſings ſhe receives, and turns the bitter Edge of all the Difficulties, Troubles, and Adverſities of Life, nay, goes farther, and makes Death it ſelf eaſy and pleaſant, while it diſarms the Terrors of it, and infuſes ſtronger Cordials to ſupport the Soul under all its Pangs. 'Twas this Love and Charity to Mankind that brought our Saviour ſo willingly to his Croſs, and inſpires the truly Pious with ſuch undaunted Courage, as not to decline a Conflict with Death it ſelf, for his ſake. All God's Dealings with the Sons of Men, proceed from a Principle of Love, nay, even his very Puniſhments do ſo; and let not a Chriſtian deny to act after ſo great an Example. There's ſcarce any of the Creatures, in which God has

has not taught us Charity. The Sun and Stars receive no benefit themſelves by the Light they give; but are liberal of it for our ſakes. The Plants of the Earth need no Phyſick for themſelves; but diſpenſe their ſeveral Vertues for the ſupport of the Life of Man. The Air we Breath, and the Rivers of the Earth, and the Creatures that cover it, are all ſubſervient to the Uſe of Man; and let it be thy Care after ſuch Examples, of things ſo much below thy ſelf, to exerciſe a univerſal Charity. To be able to ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels will avail us nothing, if we have not Charity; ſuch a Knowledge may make us proud of our ſelves, but 'tis Charity muſt make all our Knowledge ſolid and inſtructive. To be able to comprehend all Myſteries without this, wou'd do us little good, for the Devil himſelf has a Pretence to ſuch a bare and naked Knowledge of theſe things; but Charity nothing ſhares with the true Chriſtian in but himſelf. A Faith ſtrong enough to remove Mountains, has no Vertue in it without this; ſuch a Faith indeed has ſomething in it that is Miraculous, but nothing whereby to ſave the Soul of ſuch a bare Believer only. Charity has upon this Account a Preference over the Gift only of working Miracles, becauſe the one is the true and diſtinguiſhing Mark of

a good

a good Chriſtian; but the other has been ſometimes permitted to be done by the Hands of Impiety. Tho' a Man beſtow all he has to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth him nothing, he may be hypocritical in all this, and give out of ſome ſiniſter deſign, and not out of a true Spirit of Pity and Compaſſion: Our Bounty may flow like a Tide upon the Poor, but it muſt be the Charity of our Hearts, that muſt move our Hands, or it loſes all its Value. *Charity ſuffereth long*; for it will require ſome time to prevail with a Man to conceive an Anger againſt one he truly loves. *Charity is kind*; For how can he withhold the leſſer good Things from his Neighbour, who has already given him thoſe of far greater Value, his Heart, and the Affections of his Soul? *Charity envieth not*; for it looks upon the enjoyments of others with the ſame juſt Eye it contemplates its own. *Charity carrieth not it ſelf raſhly*; for 'tis offering Violence to a Man's ſelf, to injure the Man he dearly loves. *Charity is not puff'd up*; 'tis this that makes us Members of the ſame Body, and not to prefer our ſelves one before another. *Charity behaveth not it ſelf unſeemly*; 'tis Paſſion that tranſports us to act beyond the Bounds of decency; but Charity gives a check to our Paſſions, and keeps them under a becoming

Govern-

Government. *Charity ſeeketh not her own*; for ſhe prefers, in love, another's Intereſt before what ſhe might juſtly challenge to her ſelf. *Charity is not eaſily provoked*; for ſince Pride is the great Incendiary to Paſſion, ſhe ranks her ſelf ſo low in her own eſteem, as not to tempt a Provocation. *Charity thinks no evil*; becauſe a Deſign of doing harm to any one, is a proof we have no love for him whom we wou'd thus undermine. *Charity rejoiceth not in Iniquity*; but has as tender a ſenſe of the Miſeries of others, as ſhe has of her own; therefore *beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*; for this is the Rule ſhe proceeds by, in the Conduct of her Actions, to do nothing to others, that ſhe wou'd not deſire others ſhou'd do to her. *Whether there be Prophecies they ſhall fail, whether there be Tongues they ſhall ceaſe, whether there be Knowledge it ſhall vaniſh away; but Charity never faileth:* And with whatever Imperfection it be attended in this imperfect Life, as all our Actions muſt be, it ſhall be compleated in the next, and made perfect with an acceſſion of a boundleſs Love. Our Charity ſhall live, and be tranſlated with us into another World; and that Love that warm'd our Hearts while we were Members of the Church Militant here on Earth, ſhall burn with extended Flames, when we come to join

join our ſelves with the Church Triumphant that is above.

CHARITY, *Decent, Modeſt, Eaſy, Kind,*
Softens the high, and rears the abject Mind:
Knows with juſt Reins, and gentle Hand to guide,
Betwixt vile Shame, and Arbitrary Pride.
Not ſoon Provok'd, ſhe eaſily Forgives,
And much ſhe Suffers, and as much Believes:
Soft Peace ſhe brings where-ever ſhe arrives,
She builds our Quiet, as ſhe forms our Lives;
Lays the rough Paths of peeviſh Nature even,
And opens in each Heart a little HEAV'N.

Each other Gift which God on Man beſtows,
Its proper Bounds, and due Reſtriction knows;
To one fix'd Purpoſe dedicates its Pow'r,
And finiſhing its Act, exiſts no more.
Thus, in obedience to what Heav'n decrees,
KNOWLEDGE *ſhall fail, and* PROPHECY *ſhall*
[*ceaſe;*
But laſting CHARITY's *more ample Sway,*
Nor bound by Time, nor ſubject to decay,
In happy Triumph ſhall for ever live,
And endleſs good diffuſe, and endleſs Praiſe
[*receive.*

Let the Thoughts of this, O devout Soul, raiſe thee to a Life of Charity. Whatever Character thy Neighbour bears, conſider him as one for whom thy Saviour died: Why then ſhou'dſt thou refuſe to be at the expence of thy Charity towards him, for whom thy Saviour was ſo readily at the expence of his own Life? If thou haſt a true Love for God, thou wou'dſt even love whatever thou find'ſt ſtampt with his Image. We have all one Spiritual Body, let one Spiritual Soul actuate and run through us all; 'tis not becoming us, nor fit that we, who are one Day to live together in Heaven, ſhou'd quarrel and fall out with one another upon Earth; while we all agree in the ſame Chriſt, let us all *will* the ſame things. We are all Servants of one and the ſame Lord, 'tis hard we ſhou'd not agree among our ſelves; that Limb muſt be numb'd with a dead Palſie, that has no concern for the Pains of its fellow Member: Nor let that Chriſtian boaſt himſelf as a Member of Chriſt's Myſtical Body, who will not condole the Sufferings of every other Chriſtian that ſuffers with him. We have all of us God for our common Father, whom Chriſt has taught us daily to call upon, under that merciful Compellation: How can'ſt thou expect to be own'd by him for his Son, unleſs thou

thou own his Sons to be thy Brethren. Love every Man whom God has thought fit to recommend to thy love, if he be worthy of it, love him upon that account; if unworthy, love him notwithſtanding; becauſe God is worthy of, and challenges thy Obedience in this from thee. If thou lov'ſt thy Enemy, thou wilt approve thy love to God. Do not ſo much regard what any Man does to thee, as what thou thy ſelf haſt done againſt God: Set not thy Thoughts upon the Injuries that are done thee; but conſider the Mercies and Favours that God has conferr'd upon thee, who commands thee to love thy very Enemies. We are Neighbours by the ſame common Nature, born together into the ſame World, and to live the ſame Life; and the hope of the ſame Happineſs makes us Co-heirs to the ſame Inheritance. Let us then love one another as is fit for Perſons ſo nearly related. And do thou, O God, by thy Bleſſed Spirit, enflame our Hearts with a true Charity. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O Lord, who haſt taught me that all my Doings, without Charity, are nothing worth, ſend thy Holy Ghoſt, and pour into my Heart that moſt excellent Gift of

Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Vertues, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before thee. O let my love to my Neighbour be as that of my ſelf, let nothing provoke me to hate or to deſpiſe him; but from all his Infirmities and Defects, let me more clearly ſee into my own, and conſider that I am liable to, and partaker of the ſame Human Frailty. Let his Vertues raiſe my eſteem of him, and in me a Holy Emulation of being like him, in every thing wherein he is conformable to thy Will. Let the Honeſty of his Intentions, tho' attended with a Weakneſs of Judgment, create my Pity; but by no means move me to Contempt. Let not his Wickedneſs incline me to paſs a haſty and final Judgment upon his Soul, ſince 'tis in thy Power to reclaim him from the Evil of his ways, and haſt put it into my Hands to ſhow my Charity, by reproving him for his Sins. If thy Mercies to him are great, let me rejoice at his Happineſs; and when he receives Evil from thee, let my Compaſſion ſhow a true fellow-feeling at his Sufferings, by relieving him to my Power, or recommending him in my Prayers to thee, who art only able to remove his Sorrows, and ſupply his Wants. Let me not add to the Diſgrace he may have deſerv'd, by uncharitably aggravating his Faults;

Faults; but, to the utmoſt of my Power, and as far as is conſiſtant with my Duty to thee, *conceal his Defects*; and when, through the Malice of an ill-natur'd World, he is abus'd and wrong'd in his good Name, and the ſincerity of his Intentions, let me, with a well temper'd Zeal, and a Meekneſs of Charity, vindicate his injur'd Reputation. Thus, O Lord, do thou teach me to be Affable and Courteous to my Inferiors, Candid to my Equals, ſubmiſſive and reſpectful to all thy Providence has plac'd over me in a higher Station, both in Church and State, thankful to my Benefactors, ſlow to anger, eaſy to be intreated, ready to forgive even the worſt of all my Enemies. Thus let me approve my ſelf thy true Diſciple, by following the Example of my Bleſſed Saviour, whoſe whole Life was one continu'd Act of Charity, towards me, and towards the whole World: Even Jeſus Chriſt, my moſt Charitable and moſt Loving Redeemer. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXVII.

Of Chaſtity.

1 Cor. III. 16, 17.

Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
If any Man defile the Temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy; for the Temple of God is Holy, which Temple ye are.

HE that wou'd approve himſelf a Diſciple of our Saviour's, muſt be careful to keep himſelf Chaſt and Holy, and bring himſelf, in this, to be like that God he ſerves, who is a Being without the leaſt mixture of Impurity, and muſt be call'd upon with Prayers that proceed from a Chaſt and Simple Heart. Upon this Account 'twas the Saying of a Wiſe Man, That *Religion and Happineſs had no Paſſage into them, but by the Chaſtity of our Bodies, and the Sanctity of our Minds.* Where the Body is defiled with Luſt, the Soul has little Power of ſhewing any fervency in its Devotion. *Our Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*; not to defile the Habitation of ſo pure a Spirit, ſhou'd be our greateſt Care and moſt Religious Fear. *Our Members are the Members of Chriſt*; *Shall we then take the Members*

of

of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid. Let our Faith and Chaſtity ſhew that we are of one Spirit with him; but let not an Harlot partake with us in ſo Spiritual a Union. The *Sodomites*, while they burnt with Luſt, were ſtruck Blind from Heaven; and the Judgment had this farther Terror went along with it, that not only their Bodies, but their Souls were overſpread with darkneſs; nor was this Puniſhment their's only, but ſtill continues to purſue all the Sons of Luſt. Showers of Fire and Brimſtone, ſhow'd the diſpleaſure of Heaven, againſt the Luſts of *Sodom*; but more terrible ſhall it be for the Impure, when the Wrath of God ſhall fan their luſtful Flames into an Eternal Fire, a Fire not to be extinguiſh'd, *But the Smoak of their Torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever.* Theſe are thoſe impure and polluted Wretches, which St. *John* compares to Dogs, and are *without*, that is, unfit to be admitted into the Fellowſhip of the heavenly *Jeruſalem.* *Gen.* 19. 11. *Ver.* 34.

When we were Baptiz'd, Chriſt waſh'd us Pure with his moſt precious Blood, let us not defile our ſelves again, by our own Pollutions. Nature teaches ſuch wicked Wretches Modeſty enough to conceal their filthineſs from the Eyes of the World, and

yet have they not Modeſty enough of their own to keep them from committing ſuch beaſtly Sins in the ſight of God and his Holy Angels; not conſidering that no Walls are thick enough to exclude the piercing Eye of God; no Retirement ſo remote as to ſhut out Angels; no ſecret Chambers ſo darkned as to extinguiſh the Light of their own Conſciences. 'Tis ſtrange the ferment of luſtful Paſſions ſhou'd work ſo high, as ſcarce to be bounded by Heaven it ſelf, when the ſtanch of ſo corrupt a Diſeaſe ſcatters its Infections ſo low. The ſhort lived Pleaſure ſhall beget an Eternity of Sorrow, the delightful ſenſe of it expires in a Moment; but the guilt ſticks by us for ever: The Luſt dies with the commiſſion of it; but the Puniſhment goes with us into another World.

Let the Memory of thy Crucified Saviour teach thee to mortifie thy Fleſh; and the Thoughts of a Hell to come, damp all thy luſtful Fires, and the Tears of a true Repentance put out the Flames within thee. Let a Religious fear of God run through thy very Fleſh, that a carnal Love may not betray thee to the ſinful Acts of Luſt. Reaſon with thy ſelf, and conſider that the firſt Deſires of an inordinate Luſt are full of Trouble, Raſhneſs, and Frenzy; the Act it ſelf deteſtable and infamous; and the Conſequence

ſequence of it Shame and Repentance. Be not taken with the Charms and Beauty of a tempting Face; but caſt thy Eye upon thoſe Stings of Conſcience thy diveliſh Luſt carries in its Tail, and will leave behind it. Set not thy Heart upon the ſhort-lived Pleaſure; but think how laſting that Damnation for it muſt be that ſhall endure for ever. Let the Knowledge thou may'ſt acquire in the Scriptures be thy greateſt delight, and the Vices of thy Fleſh ſhall be thy greateſt abhorrence. Be always buſying thy ſelf about lawful Employments, that when the Tempter comes, he may find thee otherwiſe engaged: He catch'd *David* amidſt his idle Hours; but *Joſeph*'s neceſſary Cares preſerv'd his Innocency. Let the Thoughts of an approaching Death make thee deſpiſe all the Pleaſures of Senſe, and let the love of Temperance bring all thy luſtful Deſires into a ſubjection to thy Mind. The Blood, enflam'd with exceſs of Wine, will diſcharge the fiery Spirits by the Vent of Luſt. Our Chaſtity is endanger'd by the pampering of our Bodies, and we feed an Enemy within us, while we exceed the Bounds of Temperance. 'Tis our Duty ſo to diet our Bodies, as to keep them under, and ſuch muſt the Command be we have over them, as not to ſuffer them to grow proud and wanton. Lay before thy Thoughts the

Terrors of the final Judgment, and ſuch a Reflection will eaſily damp all thy luſtful heat. *For the Secrets of all Hearts ſhall be laid open*; How much more then, our Sins committed in ſecret? There will be a ſtrict Account requir'd from us, for all our *Idle and unprofitable Words*; How much more for our filthy and obſcene Speeches? And if theſe muſt ſo ſeverely be accounted for, How much more ſhall the Actions of Impurity be demanded at our Hands? The Accuſation of thy Conſcience ſhall purſue thee as long as thou liveſt, and the ſeveral Acts of thy Luſt ſhall be as ſo many Witneſſes againſt thee. Thoſe luſtful Thoughts of ours, which by our frequent converſe with them, were at length grown familiar, and we reckon'd to have little or no Sin in them, ſhall wait on us at our departure into another World. What Advantage then will it be to thee to conceal thy Whoredom for a while, and appear innocent in the ſight of Men, when in the Day of Judgment it muſt be laid open, and all thy Secrets diſclos'd in the Face of a whole World? What though thou eſcape an earthly Tribunal, when thou ſhalt never be able to hide thy ſelf from appearing at the Barr of thy Great Judge? A Judge not to be brib'd with Gifts; but impartial in his Juſtice? All thy Entreaties ſhall never be able to move him, for with

ſtrict

ſtrict ſeverity ſhall he Judge the World; thou canſt not fly ſo far from under his Province and Juriſdiction, but his Power will reach thee; thy vain Excuſes of thy Sin, can never impoſe upon his Wiſdom; there will lye no Appeal from his Sentence once paſs'd, for there is no Court ſuperior to that of his, where Truth it ſelf will govern the Inquiſition, thy Sins be nakedly publiſh'd, and ſeverity executed with the utmoſt rigour. Let therefore, O my Soul, who haſt devoted thy ſelf to God, let the Terror of thy Judge be always before thy Eyes, and thy luſtful Paſſions ſhall not betray thee to Sin any more in this point. Let thyCharity be ſweet, thy Humility lowly, and thy Chaſtity pure and unſpotted. Learn all theſe from thy beloved Saviour, thy humble and chaſt Spouſe; great was the Honour done to this Vertue, which was kept ſacred and inviolable in the Holy Temple of his perfectly pure Body, and great muſt be the Value of that Vertue, which is able to make us live above the Fleſh, while we live in it. As there is no ſlavery ſo vile, as that of our Carnal Appetites, ſo is there no Conqueſt ſo glorious, as when we bring them into ſubjection under us. Nor does this Vertue conſiſt only in being free from all outward Acts of Impurity; but our very Thoughts muſt be pure and innocent; for

'tis the Prerogative of God, to judge the inward Thoughts of our Hearts, as well as the outward Actions of our Bodies. Our Piety is often injur'd by our Looks, and our Chaſtity many times receives vile Impreſſions by the Liberty of our Eyes: *Whoſoever*, ſays our Saviour, *looketh on a Woman to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* The greater difficulty there is in this Vertue, the more glorious will our Conqueſt be. The difficulty of ſubduing our luſtful Paſſions proceeds from this, that there is ſcarce any Age of Man exempt from its Temptations, nor any Place, from the Cottages of the Poor, to the Palaces of Princes; but this makes our Conqueſt the more Triumphant, and adds to the Merits of our Vertue: 'Tis our Duty to ſuppreſs the firſt Emotions in our Hearts, and not add Fewel, by impure Thoughts, to that which is apt enough of it ſelf to burn. When the Apoſtle adviſes us to ſtrive againſt all other Vices, he commands us to fly from this: *Flee Fornication.* For 'tis with this Sin, as with ſome ſort of inſinuating Strangers, who under a ſhow of Poverty come to our Houſes to beg our Charity, but have a farther Deſign upon us; if we refuſe them admittance they go away contentedly; but if we take them in, they look upon

1 *Cor.* 6. 18.

upon themſelves as of our Family, and begin to preſume upon our good Nature; and at laſt, if they find us ſuch eaſy Fools as to ſuffer all this, they govern both us and our Houſes. 'Tis thus Luſt either inſinuates it ſelf into our Breaſts, or keeps its diſtance from us, according to the Reception it meets with at our Hands; The way to get rid of ſo dangerous a Gueſt, is to ſtop all the Avenues of our Hearts againſt its Entrance. And do thou, O God, preſerve us in Purity both of Mind and Body.

The Prayer.

O Holy God, who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and hateſt thoſe Defilements which our inordinate Luſts and impure Thoughts contract upon our Souls, let thy Gracious and Holy Spirit keep me pure and unſpotted from all uncleanneſs both of Soul and Body, that he may delight to dwell in that Temple of my Heart, where nothing that is unclean ſhall be permitted to enter. Let the Purity of my Thoughts, the Innocency of my Actions, the Chaſtity of my Eyes, the Inoffenſiveneſs of my Tongue, the Cleanneſs of my Hands, and the Piety of my Heart, ſtop all the Avenues of my Soul from the admiſſion of inordinate Deſires, which

which may tempt me to the Actions of Luſt and Senſuality. Keep me from all outward Acts of forbidden Pleaſures, and guard me inwardly from the equally forbidden Thoughts of any ſecret Luſt: That I poſſeſſing my Veſſel in Holineſs, after the pureſt Example of the pureſt Jeſus, may be prepar'd, in ſome meaſure, here, but in a much greater hereafter, to lead a Spiritual Life with thoſe pure and unſpotted Souls, who, free from the Burthen and Temptations of the Fleſh, ſhall ſpend an Eternity of Bliſs in ſinging Praiſes and Hallelujahs to the Undefil'd and Spotleſs Lamb, that ſitteth upon the Throne for ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

Of the ſhortneſs of Human Life.

Job XIV. 1, 2.

Man that is born of a Woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.
He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: He fleeth alſo as a ſhadow, and continueth not.

REaſon with thy ſelf, O my Soul, upon the miſery and ſhortneſs of that Life thou leadeſt here, that thou may'ſt raiſe the Affections of thy Heart towards Heaven and heavenly things. Think how it waſts by its increaſe; how much ſhorter it grows by its length; and how every day and hour takes from the Account. 'Tis but a point, a moment, nay leſs; while we turn our ſelves round Eternity is upon us. We are but Strangers in a World we can't call our home. We have no more Intereſt in it, than what our Father *Abraham* had in the Land of *Canaan*, juſt enough to entitle us to a Sepulcher. We no ſooner begin to live, but we are dying. Like Paſſengers at Sea, whatever poſture we are in, whatever part we are acting, our Veſſel makes nearer to the Haven we are bound for, and we are forc'd to drive

drive with it: Sleeping or Waking, whether on our Beds, or purſuing the buſineſs of our Lives, we are upon our paſſage through Time to Eternity, and the end of our days will come without asking our conſents. Indeed Death is but a more proper word for Life, ſeeing every day we live we make nearer approaches towards Death, and deduct ſomething from the number of our days. We are full of ſorrow for the Hours that are gone, we toyl and labour to ſupport the preſent, and are fill'd with fears at the apprehenſion of what's to come. We come into the World with Tears in our Eyes, and weep as if we foreſaw the Miſeries we were to engage with. Our continuance in it, and our paſſage through it is full of Weakneſs and Infirmities; we labour under a numberleſs company of Diſeaſes, and the Cares that attend and goad us are too many to be accounted. When we leave it 'tis with fears upon our Spirits, and a dreadful apprehenſion of an after reckoning; for we don't barely die, but our deeds go with us into another World, and Death is but the paſſage to a future Judgment.

Our Conception in ſorrow was the Conſequence of our Sin, in Miſery are we brought forth, our Life is Pain, and our Death is Trouble. In filth are we begotten, in the dark receſſes of the Womb do we receive

ceive our firſt Nouriſhment, in pangs are we deliver'd; before we make our entry we are a burthen to them that bear us, and then like Vipers force and tear our way into the World: We are Strangers as ſoon as Born, Pilgrims all our Lives, and Death forces us to quit our Habitations and pack up for a longer Journey. In our Infancy we can give no account of our ſelves, the middle of our Lives is immers'd in Cares, and our latter days have enough to do to ſtruggle under the Infirmities of Old Age. Our time is divided into paſt, preſent, and to come. When preſent, 'tis fleeting and inconſtant; when paſt, 'tis gone as if it had never been; and as to that which is to come, we know nothing of it. We are Corruption as ſoon as Born, meer Bubbles all our Life, and when Dead, become a Prey to Worms. We are Cloath'd with Earth, we walk upon the Surface of it, and ſhall ſhortly turn into our firſt Original. The conſtraint of being born, is vile; of living, miſerable; and of dying, hard. Death and Sin are within us, preying continually upon the vitals of our Souls and Bodies.

Our Life is one continu'd warfare: Above us are evil Spirits waiting for our ruine, on all hands of us is a Treacherous World, and in our Breaſt we have our Fleſh at a continual variance with the Spirit. What then is there Man can truly rejoice in here, when there

there is no ſuch thing as a Happineſs to be depended on? What delight or pleaſure can we propoſe to our ſelves in any of the things that are before us, when they are always paſſing and tranſient; but the dangers of futurity ſhall be ever with us? When the Object of our Loves are finite, but the ſorrow for our inordinate Paſſion towards them, is always making nearer us. All we gain by a long Life, is only to increaſe the number of our Sins, to ſtay and ſee more Miſeries, and ſuffer more Misfortunes: It ſerves to enhance our guilt, and render our account more inexcuſable at the Day of Judgment. What is Man? But a Slave to Death, a Traveller upon his Journey, a meer Bubble in the Air, a Walking Shadow, and Empty Sound; he is Frail, Inconſtant, always upon the Wing, and his Life but one continued Dream, in which he cheats himſelf with airy Thoughts, and luſory Imaginations; nay, there are things not ſufficient to expreſs his Vanity by; but he is more inconſiderable than all theſe. What is the Life he leads? but a conſtant fear of his Diſſolution, a Scene of Folly in which himſelf is the chief Actor; an Abyſs of ſorrows that have their dayly flux and reflux; this Life maintain'd by a few Ounces of Blood, which a Thouſand accidental Cauſes are able to let out; and a Feaver to work it into a Ferment and Corrupt

rupt the whole Maſs. We are always treading in a maize, we enter by the Paſſages of the Womb, and have no way out but by the Gates of Death. We may draw a Moral Syllogiſm upon our ſelves, and from the Earthly Compoſition of ourHumane Nature, and the conſtant evaporating of our Spirits, conclude what infignificant Creatures we Men are, whoſe Lives are held by the moſt brittle Tenure, like Rivers are always gliding on, and expos'd to the dangers and miſeries of a tedious Warfare: And yet we are fond of Living, and cheat our ſelves with the appearance of a Happineſs we never find. If indeed we make our Judgment of the Life we lead by what it outwardly appears to us to be, there is ſomething in it that looks valuable, and engages our Wiſhes for the continuance of it; but upon a nicer ſcrutiny, and a more inward proſpect, we ſhall truly find ſo much Corruption and Inconſtancy in it, as to abate of that Value we uſually have for it. The Happineſs of this Life, while we take our view only from its outward colours and appearance, ſtrike our fancies with ſomething that pleaſes; but when we come to reaſon with our ſelves upon its real and intrinſick value, we muſt change our Judgments of it, and pronounce Levity and Vanity to be the great ingredients in our Compoſition; and that our happineſs here,

like

like the Apples of *Sodom*, will not bear too nearly to be touch'd, nor ſtand the Teſt of a more ſtrict enquiry. Let not therefore, O my Soul, this preſent Life, and the concerns of it, terminate thy Thoughts; but carry them on further, and let the proſpect of a future Bliſs employ all thy Affections after it. Set the ſhortneſs of that time we have allotted us here, and that infinite and boundleſs track of Eternity we muſt live in hereafter, ſet theſe one againſt the other, and 'twill then eaſily appear how fooliſh we are in being ſo fond of the one, and ſo wretchedly negligent of the other. 'Tis a ſhort and fleeting Life we lead, and yet upon it depends an Eternal Happineſs, or an Eternal Miſery. 'Tis a Life of Trouble and Sorrow, and yet as we behave our ſelves in it, we ſhall either gain or loſe an Eternity of Bliſs, and change our Afflictions for thoſe that are much worſe; or enter upon that happy ſtate, where all Tears ſhall be wip'd from our Eyes. If therefore in thy Affections thou doſt aſpire after a Life that ſhall be Eternal, turn the whole bent of thy deſires upwards whilſt thou art paſſing through a Life that is but momentary. Let this World while thou art uſing it, and the concerns of it, ſit looſe upon thee. Carry on the Affairs of it with a generous unconcern; but let not thy Thoughts be meanly enſlav'd with

with ſuch things as theſe: The converſing outwardly with them is what thou canſt not avoid, but the danger lies in making them the darling Objects of thy Love. Heaven is properly thy home, thy Native Country to which thou doſt belong; this World is but thy Inn, thy baiting place for a while; be not therefore ſo taken up in thy Thoughts with the delights thou meeteſt with in thy Journey, as to forget the place to which thou art going. We are all upon our Paſſage over the Waters of a troubleſome World, Eternity is the Haven we are bound for; let us not then ſo pleaſe our ſelves with the pleaſures of a Calm, as not to wiſh our Arrival at that Port where there is an Eternal Serenity, lock'd up on all ſides from Winds and Storms never more to moleſt us. This Life is always ſlipping from us, plays falſe with its admirers, balks our expectations, and flies from us faſter than our deſires can purſue it; Why ſhou'd we then place any confidence in, or rely upon ſo Treacherous a Friend? There is danger in promiſing our ſelves the ſecurity of One hour, when that hour cannot ſecure us from the ſtroke of Death: The ſureſt defence we can make againſt this uncertainty of our Lives, is to be every hour upon our guard in a conſtant expectation of our departure, and by a ſerious Repentance prepare our ſelves for the

aſſault

aſſault whenever it ſhall come. In all our Sublunary Enjoyments, which the generality of Mankind are ſo fond of, their is nothing we can call permanent or laſting, but a ſecret Worm (like that in the Prophets Gourd, with which he was ſo much delighted) is eating into our Pleaſures, and will at length ſpoil and corrupt all their Beauty. The World is ſo much defac'd from what it was under its Primitive Conſtitution, that it ſeems to have loſt all its Charms to ſeduce us; and if the Patriarchs and Fathers of old have their deſerv'd praiſes for the ſelf-denying Vertues they practis'd under ſuch a beautiful appearance of things; how ought we to blame and charge thoſe fooliſh Wretches with folly, who take a delight in periſhing with a decaying World, that is juſt periſhing of it ſelf? And do thou, O Chriſt, give us Hearts abſtracted from the love of theſe things below, and raiſe our Affections in us to thoſe that are above. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O Thou Antient of Days, whoſe Infinity is unlimited, and whoſe Years are unmeaſurable; What is Man when compar'd with thee, or the Life of Man in compariſon to thy Eternity? *Behold, thou haſt*

haſt made my days as a hands breadth, and mine Age is as nothing before thee, verily at my beſt Eſtate I am altogether Vanity: But do thou, O Lord, ſo teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto Wiſdom. And how, O Lord, when I thus wiſely compute my days, muſt I contract this Span? And what a ſhort account of Life will remain when I have deducted the Weakneſs of my Childhood, the Sins and Incogitancies of my Youth, the Cares and Troubles of the World that have taken up ſo much of my precious Time; nay, the very time I have ſpent even to ſupport that Life, and the much greater time I have laid out upon the Vanities of it? And if thy Gracious Providence ſhall conduct me thro' all the changes and chances of Life to a good Old Age, yet even then how little ſhall I be ſaid to Live? when to uphold my ſelf under it, I muſt be continually ſtrugling with my Infirmities, loſe the vigour of my Thoughts, and abate in my Spirits of that Ardour and Affection with which I ought to ſerve thee, and which thou knoweſt, O Lord, was too weak in my greateſt Strength, and in the time of my moſt eſtabliſh'd Health: But, O Lord, under all theſe juſt Thoughts of my own Frailty, be thou ever with me, and let thy Mercy, Infinite Mercy, who haſt been pleas'd to promiſe an Eternity of Happineſs, as a reward

for

for the Duties of this ſhort Life, ſhort as it is; let that Mercy be my only Comfort, and that Happineſs my reward, for the ſake of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt my Lord and only Saviour. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XXXIX.

Of the Vanity of the World.

Pſalm CXLIV. 4.

Man is like to Vanity, his days are as a ſhadow that paſſeth away.

SET not thy Affections, O my Soul, upon the World, nor upon the Things that are in it: For what will become of thy Love to theſe things, when the World it ſelf muſt paſs away, and all things here be conſum'd by Fire? Let an Eternal Happineſs be the only Object of thy Love, that thou may'ſt Live in it for ever. Vanity is a chief Ingredient of every thing here, and our fondneſs to theſe things will make us ſubject to the ſame Vanities to which they themſelves are liable: But rather be in Love with a Happineſs that will ſtick by thee, a Happineſs that will fix thy Heart upon ſuch laſting foundations of Peace and Joy, that nothing

ſhall

ſhall be able to ſhake or diſturb it. Why doſt thou pleaſe thy ſelf with the Thoughts of the Honours of this World? The deſire after theſe is inconſiſtent with that Honour thou expect'ſt from God; and Ambition will force thee to fall in with all the illegal Practiſes that lie in the way to Worldly Greatneſs; and ſuch a compliance with Men is diſpleaſing to God. Things that are periſhing and unſtable in themſelves can give us nothing laſting, nothing that we can with confidence rely on: And upon this Account it is, that the Honours of this World have nothing in them upon which we can build a true and laſting happineſs. How treacherous have theſe often prov'd? When the Man who was ſcarce able yeſterday to ſupport himſelf under the weight of his Laurels and Preferments, has the next day been leſs able to bear the load of thoſe diſgraces the World has thrown upon him. Let thy great Pleaſure be to pleaſe God; and this is the moſt ready way to that Honour he has in his Power to beſtow upon thee; an Honour that alone is ſubſtantial, and will bear thee up under all the frowns of a Malicious and Unconſtant World. Do the Honourable Titles of the World, add any thing to a Man's Vertues; or the Greater a Man is, is he upon that account the better Man? No, the true Eſtimate of his Worth, is to be

taken from his real Goodneſs; and his Character in the World ought to riſe no higher than what it will bear in the ſight of God. Our Saviour, when they ſought to make him King, withdrew himſelf from the propoſal of a Crown; but when to load him with diſgrace and the ſhameful Burthen of a Croſs was their aim, he readily offer'd himſelf to their Hands, and the ſevere uſage he met with from them. Bring thy ſelf to be like him in this ſelf-denial of thy own Honour, and delight rather in the Diſgrace than the Glory of the World, while thou preſerveſt thy own Innocency. How will he be ever brought to that higher pitch of his Duty, to be willing chearfully to lay down his Life for Chriſt and his Religion, who can't part with the Honour of this World for his ſake, and after his example? The only way to Glory, that is truly ſuch, lies through a brave contempt of the Pomp and Grandeur of the World; and in this alſo we have our Saviour for our Pattern, who through all the Ignominies and Sufferings with which his Croſs was loaded, cut his way and made a Triumphant entry into Glory. Be content therefore with whatever ſhare thou meet'ſt with, of the Contempts and Reproaches of this Life, that thy Honour may be the greater in the next. Chriſt has taught us by the Life he lead, what our

Thoughts

Thoughts ſhou'd be of all the Honours of this World; the Glory of Heaven was at his Command; nay, he alone was Glory it ſelf; and yet deſpis'd it when upon Earth. This is enough to make us ſeriouſly reflect upon our ſelves, and be deeply concern'd to think, that the more Honourable we are, and in the greater affluance we live, the farther we are from being conformable to our Saviour's Life. All the Applauſe of the World, can't give us a better Opinion of our ſelves, if in the midſt of it, a guilty Conſcience tells us how little we deſerve it. What Vertue can a Bed of State have in it, to allay the inward Scorchings of a burning Feaver? The trueſt Honour, and the trueſt Praiſe, is that which is given thee by the Teſtimony of thy own Conſcience. None can be ſo impartial Judges of thy Actions, as God and thy own Breaſt; let thy greateſt Ambition be to approve thy ſelf to theſe: Is it not ſatisfaction enough for thee, that thou thy ſelf beſt know'ſt thy own Innocency, but eſpecially, that it is known to God too? What then is it that makes thee ſo craving after Riches? He muſt be Covetous indeed, whoſe wants God cannot ſupply. This Life is but the Road we are Travelling in to our Eternal Country, what great need therefore have we for more than will juſt defray our charges? Unleſs it be to make us

more incumber'd in our Journey, and fraught our ſelves with more Ballaſt than we are able to carry. If we be the Servants of God, Chriſt, who has Heaven at his Command, is Riches enough for us. He that is Rich inwardly in the Divine Graces and Vertues Treaſur'd up in his Heart, is truly Rich; 'tis not his outward Poſſeſſions can otherwiſe make him ſo. Theſe are the true Riches which a Man can carry along with him to the final Judgment of the World: Whereas the other have an Execution ſerv'd upon them, and we muſt leave them behind us. All the Wealth we have thus amaſs'd together, is what muſt one Day Periſh; but the heaper of them dies in a much worſe Condition, if he has not in his Charity to the Poor been *Rich towards God. Thou cameſt Naked into the World, and Naked ſhalt thou return*; why then ſhou'd there be ſuch a difference in the middle of thy Life between what thou once waſt, and ſhalt again ſhortly be? Riches ought to be valu'd no farther than the abſolute occaſion we have for them; and how ſmall a Portion is it that will ſerve our neceſſities! One ſingle Ray of the Divine Grace, and the leaſt of all the Vertues, is preferable to the Riches of the whole Earth; and the reaſon for it is, that the one renders us pleaſing in the ſight of God; but the other gives us no farther intereſt in him, than

than when Vertue and Goodneſs directs the uſe of them. Our Saviour's Poverty we ought to look on with a more pleaſing Eye, than upon all the Treaſures of the Earth; his ſubmiſſion to the loweſt wants of Life, has Sanctified to us a State of Poverty, under which we may exerciſe our Patience and Humility, and a calm ſubmiſſion to the Divine Will. He came Poor into the World, and much Poorer did he live in it; and when he came to dye, was deſtitute of all the neceſſaries of Life. Why ſhou'd it ſeem hard to thee to prefer a State of Poverty before the greateſt Riches; when Chriſt himſelf forewent the Happineſs of Heaven, that he might become Poor for thy ſake? How ſhall he be ever willing to entruſt his Soul with God, who has not Faith enough to commit his Body to ſo Merciful a Keeper? How ſhall he lay down his Life for his Brother who will not lay out for him of his Riches which are of far leſs value? Riches that come to us attended with wearineſs in the acquiſition of them, create conſtant fears in the Poſſeſſion, and never fail to raiſe our grief by whatever means we loſe them, nor is this all, but there is ſomething worſe that awaits the Covetous Man; for tho' his Avaricious Appetite ſhall one day have an end, it binds him over to a Judgment from which there ſhall lie no Appeal *Bernard.* Whatever thou

ſetteſt thy Heart upon, and placeſt thy ultimate Happineſs in, thou makeſt an Idol of it to thy ſelf, and 'tis thy God: *For where thy Treaſure is, there will thy Heart be alſo.* If the outward periſhing Riches of the World, be the engagements of a Man's Heart, thoſe that are Spiritual and Eternal can never have their due value in ſuch a Man's eſteem; for the former will be a Dead weight upon his Affections, whereas the latter will raiſe them upwards. There is always ſomething of a vicious Nature in the Love of the World, that will ſtick to the Wings of our Souls, retard their flight, and endanger the loſs of our Spiritual Bleſſings. The Converſion of *Lot*'s Wife into a Pillar of Salt, is a laſting Monument to us, that we caſt not back our Eyes upon the World, but make our way directly forward to that Heaven to which we properly belong. The Apoſtles forſook all they had, and readily put themſelves under the Protection of our Saviour, as knowing what little weight their Earthly Poſſeſſions had in them, when compar'd to the true Riches he taught them. The Pleaſures of Senſe grows flat and inſippid, after we have once taſted the inward ſweets and repaſt of the Bleſſed Spirit: And the World will be diſtaſtful, where there is a true and hearty Love for Chriſt and his Religion. What is it then makes thee ſo fond of the Pleaſures of

of this Life? Let the Remembrance of thy Crucified Saviour, mortify thy desires after these things. Let the thoughts of that Fire that can never be extinguish'd, damp all thy Lustful Passions. Learn so much Wisdom as to compare the shortness of thy Pleasures, with the unconcievable length of those Punishments that shall be Eternal. Consider these as the pleasures of Beasts, and tend only to make us nearer in our resemblance to their Brutal Natures. He that delights to feed upon husks with Swine, has a Palate too much vitiated to relish the food of Angels. Let us therefore mortify our sensual Pleasures, and with *Abraham*, offer up in Sacrifice the darling of our Bosom, the inordinate desires of our Souls, by freely renouncing all our Pleasures, and chearfully submitting to the hardships of our Cross. The way that leads to Eternal Life, is not levell'd for our Passage, nor must we expect to tread on Beds of Roses; but it has its Uneavennesses and Thorns to try our Patience. Pleasures add a brightness to our Bodies, but they are Crosses and Afflictions that overspread the Soul with an inward lustre; and these mutually suppress the growth one of the other. Pleasures indeed serve to please our Bodies; but the Body is the least of the Pious Man's care, 'tis his Soul he's most concern'd for. These Gratifications of

our ſelves, lay ſuch a reſtraint upon our Hearts, that they can't be at liberty to place their Love upon God. Thou ſhalt not carry any of theſe Pleaſures away with thee when thou com'ſt to dye, nor bring them with thee into Judgment; but thy contempt of them ſhall be the greateſt Pleaſure to thee in thy laſt Hours, and at the Great Day. Let therefore the fear of God give ſuch a ſtab to thy ſenſual Thoughts, that thou may'ſt never be betray'd by thy Carnal Appetites. Let the Thoughts of God's Judgment be always before thee, that thou may'ſt not be a ſlave to the perverſeneſs of thy own Will. Think not the better of the World for the Charms it ſeems to carry with it outwardly; but conſider the Poyſonous Venom 'twill leave behind it. Let the Grace of Chriſt enable thee to Conquer all the Allurements of the World; that thou may'ſt receive from his Hands at laſt a Triumphant Crown.

The Prayer.

O Thou Eternal, Infinite, and Immutable God, happy in thy ſelf without any Controul, whom no Accidents nor any thing that is Evil can reach; who can'ſt be fruſtrated in none of thy deſires, unleſs it be by the Obſtinacy of Sinful Man, who is Re-

Rebellious to thy Will, and an Enemy to his own Happineſs. Whether ſhall I, wretched Man! betake my ſelf from the Vanities and Diſappointments my Soul meets with here; but to thee, my God, who art the ſure ſtay and Rock of my Salvation? Behold, O Lord, I am wearied with the purſuit after Sublunary things, and where I have propos'd my greateſt Satisfaction, there have I experienced my greateſt diſappointments. All my deſires either return back empty into my Breaſt, or having enjoy'd the utmoſt of my Wiſhes, ſtill I complain, and find my Soul has faculties craving after ſomething beyond all this World has in its Power to ſupply them with. O be thou the full, perfect, and only ſatisfying Object of my Happineſs! In thy Love, in thy Compaſſion, in thy Tender Mercy to unhappy, vain, and ſinful Man, let me find a ſure refuge from all the miſeries, follies, and diſappoinments I am liable to here: For thou alone canſt ſupport me under the Thoughts of my own Vanity; and the Precious Ranſom of my Soul by the Blood of thy Son, is that only that can make me of any value or eſteem in my own ſight. O Dear Jeſu, pardon the Sins and Follies of thy vain and frail Servant, and receive me for thy Mercies ſake. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XL.

Of the Advantage to be made of Temptations.

James I. 12.

Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.

THere are Advantages to be made by the Temptations we meet with here, when the Tryals we undergo ſerve to the greater encreaſe and eſtabliſhment of our Faith. Our Saviour himſelf, was contented to enter the Liſts with our great Adverſary in his Retirement from the World, that, while engaged for us, and our Salvation, he might ſhow us the way to Victory, and be the leading Inſtance of a Triumphant Faith. He made his Paſſage to his glorious Aſcenſion, through the Gates of Hell; as if it were to ſhow us, what an Ordial Tryal of Temptations our Souls muſt firſt paſs through, before they can be capable of entring into an eternal State of Bliſs. The *Iſraelites* were not to ſet down quietly in the Poſſeſſion of the promis'd Land, till they had by

by their Valour, and under the Conduct of Heaven, drove out the Idolatrous Nations that were before them. Nor let us imagine our Faith ſtrong enough to put us in Poſſeſſion of a promis'd Heaven, till its Courage has been approv'd by the Conqueſt it makes over the Corruptions of Nature, the Temptations of the World, and the Powers of darkneſs Such Tryals prove the ſtrength of our Faith; caſt off the droſſy Sediments of our Fleſh, and give us a clearer inſight into our ſelves, and the ſpiritual Concerns of our Souls. Our Faith, the greater ſhock it meets with from ſuch Oppoſitions to its Vertue, ſtrikes the deeper root, and ſtands the more immoveable upon its Baſis; it ſpreads its Branches wider, and by a more diffuſive Goodneſs grows under ſuch Temptations, in hopes to be ſhortly releas'd from the weight and burden of them. The Faithful Patriarch, when he had receiv'd the Command to Sacrifice his Son, and ſhow'd the Readineſs he had to obey the Will of Heaven, when all the ſtruggles of his Nature were not ſtrong enough to tempt him to a Diſobedience, had an Angel ſent from God to give him this Aſſurance of the Acceptance of his Faith. *Now know I that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from me.* 'Tis in imitation of this ſo exemplary a Faith,

a Faith, thou muſt be ready to offer up the moſt darling Affections of thy Heart to God, when tempted to keep them in hazard of thy Duty; and by ſuch a Sacrifice thou ſhalt be reputed as one that feareth God, and feel the inward approbation of thy Faith by the bleſſed Suffrages of thy own Conſcience. Temptation may be compar'd to a Refiner's Furnace, it purges out our Droſs, and leaves our Faith pure, without the mixture of Alloy. The Strength and Courage of the Soldier, is not known but in the heat of an Engagement; nor does our Faith appear how ſtrong it is, but at a time when Temptations put it to the Tryal. 'Twas the Winds and Storm that beat upon the Ship in which our Saviour was embark'd, that diſcover'd what little Faith thoſe Diſciples were of, who cou'd not truſt themſelves under ſo great a Pilot. When *Gideon* was to lead the *Iſraelites* againſt the Hoſt of *Midian*, he was commanded to make tryal of their Courage and Reſolution, and to make uſe of none but thoſe who had Bravery enough for the Undertaking; 'tis the ſame Eſſay God makes upon our Faith by Temptations and Afflictions, to try what Stock of Courage we have, and how much we are willing to undergo for the ſake of an Eternal Happineſs. Whatever Croſſes and Temptations thy Faith has to ſtruggle with here,

here, look on them as things by which God deſigns to prove thy Vertue, not as Arguments that he has caſt thee off, or as Inſtances of his Diſpleaſure. 'Tis by theſe thy great Phyſician is for purging away all malignant Humours, and preſcribes thee theſe Bitter Draughts to correct that Fondneſs thou wou'dſt otherwiſe have for thy ſelf, and for the World. Troubles naturally drive us to the Scrutiny of our Conſciences, and bring the Sins of our Life paſt freſh into our Memories, and are, like ſome ſort of Medicines, many times the happy Preſervatives of our Health againſt the future Infection of our Sins. The Nature of Man is ever liable to fall; but more ſubject is he to it, under a proſperous than an adverſe State: Riches many times prove Thorns, that fill the Owners of them with anxious Cares, and uneaſy Thoughts; 'tis therefore a Mercy in God to remove theſe, and ſet the Soul at Liberty to purſue its Happineſs, free from ſuch ſtifling Incumbrances: The buſy Concerns of Life, and the various Projects by which Men drive on the World, are as ſo many Diverſions from that Duty they owe to God; 'tis therefore the Diſpenſation of his Wiſdom, when he viſits ſuch Men with Sickneſs, in order to bring their Thoughts home from the World, that they may begin, at laſt, to mortifie their Affections towards it, and fix them upon him and his Service.

Many

Many that once by Fortune's Bounty rear'd,
Amidſt the Wealthy, and the Great appear'd,
Have wiſely from thoſe envy'd Heights declin'd,
Have ſunk to that juſt level of Mankind,
Where nor too little, nor too much, gives the
true Peace of Mind.

The Honours of the World have generally this effect upon thoſe that carry them, that they ſwell them into Pride; to remove this fewel that feeds this Tympany of their Minds, God often brings them into Contempt, and gives them a truer ſenſe of themſelves and their own Condition. Again, Temptations give us a clearer inſight into our ſelves, and the Value of thoſe things we ſo much admire. We are never ſo apt to acknowledge the Frailty and Vanity of thoſe Comforts we propos'd to our ſelves in our earthly Enjoyments, as when we come to find in what little ſtead they ſtand us under our Temptations. St. *Stephen* was bleſſed with the comfortable Viſion of his Saviour, to ſupport him under the Agonies of his Martyrdom; nor is Chriſt leſs ready to communicate himſelf to the truly contrite Soul, when ſhe lies under the chaſtizing Hand of God: And in this Communication of God himſelf, conſiſts the only Comfort under all our Sufferings, and *an*

humble

humble and contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe. 'Tis by ſuch harſh Diſpenſations of the Divine Providence, that our Spirits are made truly contrite and humble; and upon this account it is, the Pious Soul never wants a ſolid Joy and Comfort, under the ſevereſt of her Afflictions. Such Tryals as theſe encline God to take cognizance of our Faith, and pity our Condition; who has promiſed *to be with us in Trouble, and to ſhew us his Salvation.* What makes St. *Paul* ſay, that we ſee *as through a Glaſs darkly*, but to expreſs how ſhort ſighted we are into the myſterious Deſigns of God's Providence? Our Temptations ſerve to enlarge our ſight, and makes us acknowledge, that God, while he ſeems to afflict his Servants, can turn all their Sorrow into Joy; can, from the Brink of Death, raiſe them to a State of Health; Cure them by making them Sick, and by Poverty bring them to the trueſt Riches. Our Croſs therefore, and the Tryals we meet with by our Sufferings, we ought chearfully to bear, if it were only out of a ſenſe of Gratitude to that Saviour of ours, who was contented to be Crucified, and Tempted for our ſakes. O Merciful Jeſu, rack me with the moſt burning Pains, ſtrike thy Arrows deep into my Sides, while thou art proving me in this World, that I may find thy Mercy towards

me

me in the next. And O! thou ſame Merciful Saviour, who many times ſhow'ſt thy Diſpleaſure by paſſing us by unpuniſh'd, let the Severities of thy Providence have this effect upon us, as to bring us home to thee and to our Duty. Load my outward Man with what Afflictions thou in thy Wiſdom ſhalt think fit to lay upon me, that the Vertues of my Soul may grow and encreaſe under ſuch Preſſures of thy Correction. In all my Temptations be thou with me, to fight my Battels for me. Be thou the bleſſed Umpire in all my Conflicts, and crown my ſteady Reſolutions with a happy Victory. Whatever Croſſes thou haſt allotted for me to undergo here, let them all ſerve to the ſtrength and encreaſe of my Faith in thee. Help, O Bleſſed Jeſu, help the Infirmity of my Faith; for which I have thy Promiſe by the Mouth of thy Holy Prophet. *As one whom his Mother comforteth, ſo will I comfort you.* O let thy Compaſſion to my Faith, be like the tender Affections of a Mother to her ſucking Infant; raiſe it to a moſt exalted pitch, and ſtrengthen it, that it may never languiſh nor decay. Let the inward Comforts of thy Spirit have a more prevailing Influence to ſupport me, than all the Contradictions of Man, the Malice of Hell, and the Miſgivings of my own Breaſt, can have to caſt me down. O thou Charitable

ble *Samaritan*, pour in Wine to corrode and eat away the Canker of my Sins; but let there be a Mixture to of Oyl, that of thy divine Comfort, leaſt it be too ſtrong for me. Multiply my Sufferings, and add what thou pleaſeſt to the weight of my Croſs; but in Mercy give me ſtrength to bear all the Diſpenſations of thy Providence.

The Prayer.

O Holy and Victorious Jeſu, who haſt commanded me to take up my Croſs and follow thee, and that nothing might diſcourage me under the Tryal of Temptations, haſt promis'd me ſtrength to bear them with a due ſubmiſſion to thy Father's Will. Behold, Lord, now is the time I ſtand in need of thy Aſſiſtance; for I am on all hands beſet, ſtrongly beſet, with the Corruptions of my own Nature, the Inſinuations of the Wicked One, and the Enticements of a deceitful World. How ſhall I, a weak and helpleſs Man, be able of my ſelf to go out againſt ſuch powerful Enemies to my Soul? Of my ſelf, O Lord, I know I am not able to do the leaſt towards my Preſervation; but *my help ſtandeth in the Name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth*; in the ſtrength of this will I march forth, and having my Body cover'd with the

Shield

Shield of Faith, will I join Battel with all the Powers of darkneſs. *The Lord is on my ſide, I will not fear; the Lord taketh my part with them that help me; therefore ſhall I ſee my deſire upon them that hate me.* And as, O Lord, thou haſt promis'd, by the Aſſiſtance of thy Spirit, thus to make me Victorious, ſo do thou teach me to improve all my Tryals and Afflictions, to the Advantage of my Soul, and let the Divine Graces thou art pleas'd to beſtow upon me, ſhine brighter and more perſpicuous, for the oppoſitions they may at any time meet with. Let no Condition of Life, attended with the ſtrongeſt Temptations, make me quit my Faith and Confidence in thee; but draw Advantage to my ſelf, even from the worſt that may befall me. For I know, O Lord, the hardeſt Diſpenſations of thy Providence, are ſent upon the kind Errand of Reforming whatever thou ſee'ſt amiſs in me; for thou delighteſt not to grieve the Sons of Men, nor doſt thou take any pleaſure in the Death of a Sinner. I will therefore receive all thou ſendeſt thankfully, and, tho' with Tears in my Eyes, will I kiſs the Hand which ſo mercifully chaſtiſes me here, that I may'nt be condemn'd hereafter. Into thy Hands therefore, O Jeſu, I reſign my Soul and Body, do thou with them as thou pleaſeſt, for in thee I truſt; hear my Prayer, and recieve me for thy Mercies ſake. *Amen.* ME-

MEDITATION XLI.

The Principles of Chriſtian Patience.

Luke XXI. 19.

In your Patience poſſeſs ye your Souls.

LAY aſide thine uneaſy Thoughts, O my Soul, and with Patience bear thy ſelf up under that Croſs the Wiſdom of God has thought fit to lay upon thee. Let thy Thoughts dwell a while upon the Sufferings of thy beloved Saviour; Sufferings his were of a univerſal extent, whither we conſider the whole Maſs of Mankind, for whoſe ſake he underwent them; the general conſent of all Parties to encreaſe the weight of them; or the ſeveral Inſtances in which his Righteous Soul was beyond meaſure griev'd and afflicted. Univerſal was his Paſſion, ſince it was for the ſake of a whole World; nay, not to the excluſion of thoſe who deſpiſe the Riches of his Croſs, and trample under foot the Blood of the Holy Covenant. There was a Univerſal Conſent to enhance his Sufferings; he was deliver'd up by his Father to the Malice of his Murderers; he was broken upon the Croſs, and forſaken of God in the laſt Agonies of his Death. His Diſciples left him upon his Tryal, and the

Jews,

Jews, his own peculiar People, rejected him for their Saviour, and preferr'd a Robber to the favour of his Judge before him. Both *Jews* and *Romans* were accessary to his Sufferings, and in that all Mankind were concern'd in the Sacrifice that he offer'd up for their Sins; all Mankind was necessarily involv'd in the guilt of his Crucifixion. He suffer'd in all the Instances of Sorrow; his Soul was sorrowful even unto Death; and while it lay under the amazing sense of Divine Justice, complain'd that she was forsaken by God; the Drops of Blood, that forc'd their way through his Pores upon the Cross, show'd the more than common Agonies the Son of God labour'd under; his Head was pierc'd with Thorns, his Tongue drench'd with the bitter Draught of Gall and Vinegar, his Hands and Feet bor'd through with Nails, his Side stabb'd with a Spear, his whole Body scourg'd and expanded upon a Cross: While on Earth, Hunger, Thirst, Cold, Contempt, Poverty, Revilings, Wounds, Death, and that an ignominious one too, were what thy Saviour was content to suffer for thee. How unreasonable then must it be, for thy Redeemer to undergo all this, and that thou who art a Sinner shou'dst meet with nothing to disturb thy Ease? What injustice wou'd it be, that our Saviour shou'd feel so grievous

grievous a Puniſhment for our Sins, and we take pleaſure in thoſe that were the cauſe of it? How can we anſwer it to our ſelves, that he who is our Head ſhou'd be thus afflicted, and we who are Members of his Body ſhou'd have no fellow-feeling at his Sufferings? Is it not rather our Duty, through Tribulations and Afflictions to force our way to an Eternal Happineſs after his Example? Thou wilt have no reaſon to repine at all this, if thou doſt but conſider what an unconceivable Reward awaits thy Victories in another World. *All the Sufferings of this Life, are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory that ſhall be reveal'd in us*; as great as they may be, they are but Temporal, and many times but of one days continuance, whereas the Glory that is to be thy Reward ſhall be Eternal. God Regiſters all our Sufferings, and will account for them in our Favour, when we come to Judgment: How much aſham'd then muſt we be, to appear at that ſolemn Meeting of the whole World, deſtitute of thoſe Ornaments which our Croſs and Sufferings will add to the brightneſs of our Souls? A time when our Saviour himſelf *ſhall wipe all Tears from our Eyes.* Happy Tears! that ſhall have ſo great and merciful a Saviour to gather them up with his own Hand! O Bleſſed Croſs, that ſhalt reward thoſe that carried

carried thee with an Eternal State of Bliſs!

David's Exile from his Throne, bore but a fifth part in proportion to thoſe many Years he enjoy'd his Crown in Peace; which may in ſome meaſure, tho' far ſhort in the Compariſon, repreſent to us that Eternity of Glory, that ſhall follow our ſhort and momentary Sufferings in this World. 'Tis but a ſhort time the Righteous Man's Faith ſhall ſtruggle under the Afflictions of his Croſs; but the Mercies of Ages ſhall purſue him whereby to recover all his Loſſes; *and thus heavineſs may endure for a Night, but joy cometh in the Morning.*

Again, Let the thoughts of what Holy Men and Saints have ſuffer'd before thee, help to allay all thy uneaſy Murmurs at the Providence of God. Think to what a high degree of ſorrow the Tryals of *Job* had ſwell'd his righteous Soul, when he was expos'd naked and deſtitute of all earthly Comforts; to what pinching hunger the fore-runner of our Saviour was reduc'd in the Wilderneſs; under what diſtorting Pains St. *Peter* lay, when extended upon the Rack; and through what a Sea of Blood St. *James* waded to his Martyrdom. Caſt thy Eye upon the Bleſſed Mother of thy Saviour, and conſider what

what an exceſs of Sorrow it rais'd in her tender Breaſt, to ſtand by and behold the Agonies of her dying Son; in this mournful Poſture was ſhe the Type of the Church of Chriſt, under all its Sufferings. *Bleſſed are you*, ſays our Saviour, *when Men ſhall revile and perſecute you for my Names ſake, rejoice and be exceeding glad, for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets that were before you.* O glorious Perſecution! that reſembles us to the Prophets, Apoſtles, and Holy Men of old, nay, which is more, to our ſuffering and perſecuted Maſter. Let us therefore be content to ſuffer in ſuch glorious Company, and carry our Croſs patiently after thoſe who have ſo bravely bore it before us, that the Glory with which they are crown'd for all their Conqueſts, may one day caſt a Luſtre about our own Heads. If it be our Honour to be the Sons of God, let us not decline to take our Portion of Afflictions with thoſe that are of the ſame Family with our ſelves. If to be Heirs of God be our hopes, let us take all that can entitle us to ſo bleſſed a Relation; his Children have not only the Promiſe of Joy and Happineſs in another World, but 'tis their Lot, their Portion, aſſign'd them by their Father, to run through a courſe of Grief and Sufferings, in their way to this their glorious Inheritance; and in all

theſe

theſe his ſeemingly ſevere Dealings of his Wiſdom, he has a Merciful Deſign upon our Happineſs; for *whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth; and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.* His Puniſhments have always an Eye upon our Sins; their Meſſage is to make us better, and we ſhall be more fully convinc'd of the Mercy of them, when we come to Judgment. He redoubles the ſtrokes of his Chaſtiſement here, that he may in as many Inſtances add to the Proportion of our Rewards hereafter; and thus we have an encreaſe of our Crown, as well as an augmentation of our Sufferings. Conſider again the happy Advantages thou may'ſt reap by the preſſure of thy Croſs. Nothing does ſo effectually ſerve to extinguiſh that fondneſs we generally have for the World, as the Croſſes and Diſappointments we meet with from it; nor is ſo apt to wean us from the Enjoyments of it, and ingraft in our Hearts the Principles of a love towards God. They naturally make us out of Conceit, and beget a Hatred in us to theſe ſublunary things, and ſpiritualize our Thoughts, and carry them to a more ſubſtantial Happineſs that is above. When our Natural Inclinations to theſe things are brought into a due ſubjection, the Spirit is the more at liberty, and grows lively in its

Opera-

Operations upon our Souls; the leſs reliſh we have of the World, the greater guſt we have for Chriſt, and the ſweetneſs of Divine Grace. Our Afflictions work upon us after a ſecret and myſterious manner; they are as ſo many Calls of God to a true Repentance, to an awful Fear of his Almighty Power, and to try how far our Patience is able to hold out under his chaſtizing Hand: Let us willingly attend to theſe kind Invitations of his Providence, and wait the iſſue of the Divine Pleaſure, whatever the Lord has in Mercy, to communicate to our Souls. While through our fondneſs for the World, and the Corruption of Nature, we look upon the Croſs or Sufferings we are to bear, we are apt to deſpiſe ſuch ſevere Terms of our Salvation; but they have a more glorious Aſpect in the ſight of God, and even of our ſelves, when we conſider them with Thoughts abſtracted from all carnal Conſiderations. What more deſpicable and abject in the Opinion of *Jews*, than was the Croſs and Sufferings of our Saviour? yet what an ineſtimable Value and Merit was it of, in the acceptance of his Father, when it prov'd a full, perfect and ſufficient Sacrifice for the Sins of a whole World? 'Tis the ſame Judgment the World ſtill makes, for *the righteous periſheth, and no Man*

ayeth it to Heart; but dear in the ſight of God are the Death of the Saints. The Church of Chriſt, while it labours under Calamities and Perſecutions, looks cloudy and obſcur'd, but the inward ſupport ſhe receives from the Rays of the divine Favour, caſt a Brightneſs upon all her Sorrows, and increaſe her Beauty; we are excluded from diſcerning at a diſtance theſe inward Graces, and that Light which Faith diffuſes upon our Souls, till we come to take a nearer View, by being admitted into the ſecret Conſolations of the Spirit of God. We ſhall never be ſenſible of this, till our Afflictions bring us to look more narrowly into our ſelves and our ſpiritual Concerns. The love of God, and that of the World, are ſuch Strangers to one another, that they can never dwell together in the ſame Heart; there is not room enough for them both, we muſt diſcard the one, that the other may reign abſolutely in us without any Competitor. 'Tis upon this account God is for extinguiſhing our Affections to the World, by the Croſs he lays upon us, that our love of him may fill all the Receſſes of our Hearts. Add to this, that our Afflictions force us often to bend our Knees at the Throne of Mercy, and are the happy occaſions to exert our Vertues; which like Spices, the more they

are

are preſs'd, ſend forth a more pleaſing Odour in the Noſtrils of our good God. The Bridegroom of our Souls, is repreſented to us as White and Ruddy, the one to denote his ſpotleſs Innocence, and the other, that Sea of Blood he waded through in his Suffering; and that we may bear ſome Reſemblance to our Maſter, 'tis the Will of God, the Beauty of our Innocence, ſhou'd be ſhaded with the dark, but becoming ſtrokes of ſorrow; and as the Divine Grace is able to force the gentleſt Lenitives out of the hardeſt of our Afflictions, ſo to our comfort, can it make the cauſe of all our Sufferings, productive of thoſe Vertues, that ſhall bring forth Fruit to Eternal Life. To which may the ſame Grace and Favour of God, promote and bring us, for his Mercy's ſake. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O LORD, thou God of Patience, Long-ſuffering, and Forbearance, who ſpareſt us when we deſerve Puniſhment, and in thy Wrath thinkeſt upon Mercy: Endue me with ſuch a Portion of this thy excellent Goodneſs, that no Croſſes or Afflictions may break the evenneſs of my Mind, but by an entire reſignation of my Will, to that of my heavenly Father, I may in

Patience, Meekneſs, and Humility, poſſeſs my Soul. Never ſuffer me by any Murmurings, Diſcontent, or uneaſy Thoughts, to diſpute with thee thy Government over me, or deny the Care and Juſtice of thy Righteous Providence. *Shall I receive Good at thy Hands, and ſhall I not receive Evil?* I know, O Lord, thou wilt not *caſt me off for ever*, nor is thy Mercy towards me quite extinguiſh'd: Thou haſt not *forgotten to be Gracious, nor ſhut up thy Compaſſion in diſpleaſure.* And, O God, what little reaſon have I to complain! ſeeing there is Mercy in the ſevereſt of thy Puniſhments here, and they are far, infinitely far leſs than my Sins have deſerv'd? I will therefore lay my ſelf down patiently, under the Croſs of my Redeemer, and will wait for that happy Hour, when he ſhall take it from my Shoulders, and will be impatient for nothing but to ſee him in his Glory. And come, Lord Jeſu, come quickly, and receive me to thy ſelf. *Amen.*

MEDI-

MEDITATION XLII.

Perſeverance the way to overcome all our Temptations.

Matt. X. 22.

——*But he that endureth to the End ſhall be ſaved.*

O LORD, thou Holy Jeſus, the Beloved of my Soul, when will that happy Day come, when thou wilt lead me forth to the Solemnity of thy Nuptials? I am a *Stranger in this World*, and baniſh'd from thy Preſence; but 'tis my firm belief, which nothing ſhall ever be able to ſhake, that my Soul being freed and ſet at Liberty from its Confinement in the Fleſh, muſt e'er long appear in thy Preſence. I tremble, and am grievouſly afraid, when I conſider the Weakneſs and Infirmity of my Nature, and, that all my Vertue, and the Riches of thy Gifts towards me, are carried but in *Earthen Veſſels*: My Underſtanding is ready to lead me into Errors, and my Will prone to miſguide me into Sin; and 'tis this is the reaſon my Spirit is ſo backward in the diſcharge of its Duty; but my *Fleſh* being always *weak*, ſubjects me to the ſlavery of

Sin, and *the Law of my Members is repugnant to the Law of my Mind.* I am seiz'd with an unuſual Fear, when I conſider how the Devil is always undermining my Vertues, how ſubtil in his Inſinuations, how indefatigable in his Purſuits, and how great his Power is to deſtroy me: Paradiſe it ſelf cou'd not ſecure *Adam*, nor his Apoſtleſhip, *Judas*, from the Deceptions of this grand Seducer: How then ſhall I, who am a Sinner at large, under none of the Advantages of that Protection which they had, eſcape free from his Deſigns upon my Soul? A trembling Fear diffuſes it ſelf through my very Veins, and chills my Blood, when I conſider my ſelf in the midſt of a tempting World, a World wholly immers'd in Wickedneſs, where I am on all Hands beſet with Enemies to betray me: the Pleaſures of Life diſplay their Charms to allure me, the Croſſes I meet with, even in my Duty, diſcourage me, and I often take up with the falſe and inveigling Delights of Senſe to refreſh me; I tread continually in the midſt of Snares, unhappy Man that I am, how ſhall I take my Steps ſecure, or diſintangle my ſelf?

I am tempted by Proſperity to forget God, and in Adverſity, my dejected Soul is ready to forſake him; and how ſhall I, poor Man, be able to ſtand in theſe ſlippery Paths

Paths of the Divine Providence? I can't help being afraid, when I conſider, that 'tis *God who worketh in me, to will and to do of his good pleaſure*; and my fear is, leſt through any Neglect or Remiſneſs of mine, God ſhou'd be forc'd to take that good Will from me, which was at firſt his own Gift. I have made an unworthy Uſe of his Mercy in the Forgiveneſs of Sin, and the firſt free Tenders of his Grace, have I deſpis'd; and 'tis this Abuſe of him and his Mercy which makes me afraid, leſt by his own juſt Judgment he ſhou'd deſervedly deprive me of that which I ſo ill deſerv'd, and have ſo profanely abus'd: I am afraid of being forſaken by him whom I have ſo often turn'd my Back upon, ſince my firſt Converſion. What anguiſh does this Thought create in my Breaſt, That a much heavier and ſeverer Judgment awaits me in another World; for the greater ſhare I have had of theſe Favours of God to my Soul, if I ſhall be found an unjuſt Steward, and have made no Improvement of my Talents! But O the Infinite Mercy of God, is that alone that can raiſe my deſponding Thoughts! As he has given me a Will, ſo I doubt not but to receive from him Power to perform it; for he is always the ſame good and gracious God, nor does he ever change; his Pity is confirm'd to me by his own Promiſe, nor

ſhall one Tittle of it fail. Here then will I place the Foundation of all my Hopes, which being built upon God, nothing ſhall be able to ſhake; for *in him there is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning.* A ſure Foundation this, as being confirm'd by the Blood of Chriſt, which is ever making Interceſſion for us before his Father's Throne, and is ſeal'd and made over to us by his Bleſſed Sacraments. Shou'd I ſeek any confidence of being ſav'd in the leaſt Degree, of any Merits I cou'd find in my ſelf, I ſhou'd juſtly miſtruſt the inſufficiency of my Hopes; but as all my Righteouſneſs, ſo all my expectation of Happineſs is in the Merits of my dear Redeemer. Had it been by the ſtrength of my own Will alone, unaſſiſted by the Grace and Spirit of God, that I cloſed with and embrac'd the Terms of Salvation offer'd me in the Goſpel of my Saviour; I ſhou'd have reaſon to fear, that Will of mine wou'd not laſt always fix'd and unmoveable, but I ſhou'd loſe the Benefits of his Merits, by the fickleneſs of my own Heart; but ſince he is *found of him that ſeeketh him not*, he will not be loſt to him after ſo happy a Union: He who has brought me up from the *Shadow of Death*, into the glorious Light of his Grace and Spirit, will not ſuffer me to be caſt down into that Darkneſs with which my Soul was overſpread, before my

my Converſion. As to that Part which God bears in the Converſion of our Minds, 'tis his Will, that all his Graces ſhou'd be immutable, and his Call to Sinners effectual. O that my Goodneſs were as unchangeable, that I might never turn Apoſtate from him! The Treaſure of his Grace is always open, but we are backward and indifferent in ſtretching out our Hands, or cold in applying to thoſe Means whereby we may attain it. Yet has Chriſt put theſe happy Means into my own Power, who, as he has reveal'd himſelf to me in his Word and Promiſes, will, with the ſame Mercy, ſtrengthen my Faith in all he has ſaid and promis'd. I will therefore guard my Faith with frequent Addreſſes at the Throne of Grace, and by theſe implore his aſſiſtance to keep me ſafe from a Relapſe; nor will I, by my importunity, ſuffer him to quit his abode with me, till I have obtain'd his Salvation: *By the Power of the Lord ſhall I be preſerv'd:* 'Tis *in his Strength* I am comforted, and my Spirits receive a new Vigour; notwithſtanding my Infirmity caſts me down, yet *in my Weakneſs ſhall his Strength be made perfect:* He ſhall be my ſupport, from whom all my Faith receives its ſtrength. The Divine Grace makes me lift up my Head with a ſtrong Hope of Salvation, but my own Infirmity makes me afraid; and yet, were

there any Merit in me, I ſhou'd be apt to imagine the Grace of God was my deſert, not the free and alone Gift of him who is the beſtower of it. 'Tis this teaches me to place no Confidence in, nor to caſt an expecting Eye upon any of my own Works. Wherein I have done amiſs, his Grace will reprove me, and ſhow me the Error of my ways, and is yet wanting to make me perfect, that will ſupply; and wherein I have ſinn'd 'twill blot out my Tranſgreſſions by a true Repentance: Whatever God in Mercy will not impute to me, ſhall be as if it had never been committed. From him therefore, and from him alone, comes my Salvation; and here will I caſt anchor, to ride out all my uneaſy and diſquiet Thoughts.

The Prayer.

O Eternal and unchangeable Lord God, who art the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever. How is my Soul troubled, when I conſider the Frailty of my Nature, and the frequent Relapſes from my Duty to thee? How weak have been my beſt Purpoſes of Amendment? and how falſe have I often prov'd to my moſt Holy Reſolutions? O do thou eſtabliſh me with a more fix'd and ſteady Perſeverance in all the Ways of thy Commandments. And tho', O Lord,

I muſt

I muſt not expect an abſolute Perfection here, nor an unerring Righteouſneſs, yet do thou make me *Perfect, as thou art Perfect, Holy, as thou art Holy*, in ſuch a degree as my Nature is capable of, and in the ſame exalted Senſe in which thou haſt commanded me to be ſo; all my Goodneſs is but *as a Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew it paſſeth away.* O Pity my Infirmities, have Mercy upon my Sins, and grant that *wherein I have offended, I may do ſo no more.* Let thy Grace ſo ſtrengthen my Faith, that no Terrors nor Temptations, how ſtrong ſoever, may diſcourage my Conſtancy. Let a true and unfeign'd Repentance re-inſtate me in thy Favour, when I have done amiſs; but never ſuffer me to Sin wilfully, nor preſumptuouſly, in hopes of a Repentance hereafter; this were to provoke thy Anger, and offer a Deſpite to that Grace thou haſt afforded me; but let me proceed from one Degree of Vertue to another; and by a patient continuance in well doing, ſeek, and at laſt obtain, Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XLIII.

Of the daily Thoughts of Death.

Luke XII. 20.

Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee.

BE every hour, O my Soul, upon thy guard againſt the approach of Death; for every moment thou liv'ſt ſets thee nigher thy End, and Death lies upon the catch to execute the Divine Commiſſion. Think, O Mortal Man, every Morning thou riſeſt from thy Bed, that another Sun may never riſe upon thee again: And when at night thou lyeſt down on thy Pillow, think, that this may be the laſt Repoſe thou art to take on Earth. Whatever the buſineſs is thou haſt in hand, whatever Schemes or Projects thou raiſeſt to thy ſelf, firſt think and reflect whither thou would'ſt be thus imploy'd, if Death were to ſieze thee the very next hour, and thou waſt to appear before the Judgment of God. Canſt thou be ſo vain as to imagine Death is ever the farther off thee for thy not thinking of it? Or that it will e'er come the ſooner for thy converſing with it in thy Thoughts. Whether Death be the Object of thy Meditations or no, or the

the Subject of thy Diſcourſe, it matters not, 'tis every moment hanging over thy head: And thy Life was but lent thee for a while, and a Right in it not made over to thee for ever; thou wer't introduc'd upon the Stage of the World, upon Condition, that when the Scene was over, thou ſhould'ſt quit it and retire; *Naked didſt thou come into the World, and naked ſhalt thou go out of it.* The Life thou lead'ſt here is but a wandring Pilgrimage, when thou haſt walk'd up and down in it, and thoroughly tir'd thy ſelf with the Vanities of it, thou muſt at laſt return to the place, from whence thou didſt at firſt ſet out; thou art but an Inmate and Stranger here, and wert never deſign'd to be the perpetual Owner of theſe Temporal things. Conſider then with thy ſelf every hour, the place to which every moment of thy Life thou art haſtning. We are deceiv'd when we think we are only dying at the laſt gaſp of our Lives; every day we live, every moment we draw our Breath, we are but dying Men: And every hour that is added to our Lives, takes from them, and ſhortens the days we have to live. We drop not all of a ſuddain into our Graves; but we waſte and decay leaſurely, and walk on ſlowly to our long homes. Our Life is the Road in which we Travel; we every Day abate ſomething of the journey we have to go. Death and

Life

Life are in our Thoughts at the greateſt diſtance, when indeed no two things are parted with ſo inviſible a Sign, tho' one is always upon the Wing and paſſing away from us, the other is every hour making a nearer approach to us. Like Paſſengers in a Voyage, we are not ſenſible our Ship moves upon the Waters, till unexpectedly we draw to our Port, and ſet our Feet upon the Land of Forgetfulneſs where all things are forgotten. Whatever we are doing, whither we Eat, or Drink, or Sleep, we make nearer approaches to the Arms of Death. Many have ſpun out the days of Life, while they have been buſie about the Inſtruments and Supplies that ſhou'd ſupport it; and no Man can with any Chearfulneſs look Death in the Face, who has not in his Life compos'd his Thoughts, and prepar'd himſelf againſt the arrival of it. Be dying then to thy ſelf every day thou liv'ſt, ſo ſhalt thou live to God when thou com'ſt to dye. Let thy Vicious Affections firſt expire, and go before thee to thy Grave: Let thy Old Man dye within thee, whilſt thou thy ſelf remaineſt upon Earth, and when thou com'ſt to reſign thy Breath, Chriſt ſhall live in and with thee. Let thy outward Man every day decay, ſo ſhall the inward Man, when thou com'ſt to dye, be raiſed up in thee. Death is the Paſſage out of Time into Eternity; *and as the*

Tree

Tree falls ſo ſhall it lie. What ſober Thoughts and Concern then ought we to have upon us of our dying hour? The days we are to lead here on Earth paſs ſwiftly by us, but the tracts of Eternity are boundleſs and unmeaſurable; prepare thy ſelf then in this ſhort Life, for that Eternity that ſhall laſt for ever. Whither we ſhall be Eternally Miſerable or Eternally Happy, is decided by the condition we ſhall be found in at the hour of our Death; in that momentary Paſſage we are put into the Poſſeſſion either of Happineſs or Miſery. O what Preparation then, O my Soul, ſhoud'ſt thou make with the utmoſt care, againſt that hour comes! All this World has in it to give, will look contemptible when thou conſidereſt thou muſt one day dye; place thy ſelf in thy Thoughts upon thy dying Bed, think how thy Eyes will then be overſpread with the dark night of Death; and thou wilt learn to turn them away with abhorance from the vanities of this Life; think how thy Ears at that hour will be ſtruck with Deafneſs, and thou wilt eaſily learn to ſhut them up againſt all that is Profane and Obſcene; think how thy Tongue will then cleave to the roof of thy Mouth, and thou wilt now learn to ſet a watch upon thy Lips; diſplay before thy Thoughts the Agonies of Mind and the deep Convulſions of dying Men,

and

and thou wilt eaſily learn to deſpiſe all the delights of this World; conſider how naked and poor they go out of it, and thy own Poverty will ſit the lighter upon thy Thoughts; think how ghaſtly the whole Body appears of thy departed Friend, and thou wilt contemn all the Dazling Glories of the World; ſee with what ſobs and pantings the Soul is driven out of the Body, and how ſorrowful a parting there is between them, and thou wilt be careful how thou contracteſt the guilt of Sin upon thy Soul; think what a Rotten and Corrupted Carkaſs thine will be when thou ſhalt be laid in thy Grave, and thou wilt find little reaſon to glory or be proud of thy Compoſition; think how naked and poor thou wilt then appear, when every thing ſhall forſake thee, and thou ſhalt eaſily learn to turn thy Affections from the World, and ſettle them upon God that made thee; think how narrowly Death will watch thee, that thou ſtealeſt nothing from this World to carry along with thee, and how contemptible muſt ſuch a thought as this make all the Riches of this Life be in thy Opinion! *He who is Dead in his Sins while he Lives*, ſhall paſs through Death to Eternal Puniſhment. 'Tis uſing our ſelves here to a Life conformable to Chriſt and his Religion, that muſt be our Paſsport into an Eternity of Happineſs; that when Death comes, thou

thou may'ſt find thy Life in him: Let thy Faith, attended with a correſponding practice here, inſert thy name among a Number of his Faithful Servants. Let Death be continually in thy Thoughts, for 'tis what thou do'ſt or may'ſt continually expect. Whereever we go, we carry Death about us, and while our Sins attend us, we have reaſon to expect our *Wages* for our Work. If thou woud'ſt avoid the bitter Pains of Death, keep the Commandments of thy Saviour. That Union which by our Faith we have with Chriſt, exempts us from an Eternal Death, for Chriſt himſelf who can never die, is Life. The Children of *Iſrael* through the *Red Sea* paſs'd ſafe and unhurt into the promis'd Land, while *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt Periſh'd in the Waters: A lively reſemblance this, of the different fate that attends the Righteous and the Wicked; the one in their Paſſage from the World, enter upon Life, and Death opens their admittance into Paradiſe; but the other find no end nor abatement of their Sorrows, but Death opens an Eternal Scene, that is but the laſt and more dreadful Act of the ſame diſmal Tragedy; their Paſſage is but from the firſt to the *Second Death.* There is ſo ſtrict a Union between Chriſt and a Faithful Soul, that the violence of Death it ſelf is not able to diſſolve; in the thickeſt ſhades Death draws

draws over their Eyes, they have the light of the Divine Favour going ſtill before them, and Angels to attend and direct their Paſſage through the Gates of Death. *Their Bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt*, which he will not ſuffer to be demoliſh'd as not to be raiſed up again. The Word of God is that incorruptible ſeed in their Hearts that Death ſhall not be able to extinguiſh; but God in his own due time ſhall raiſe them again to Life.

The Prayer.

O Lord, thou Everliving God, in whoſe hands are the Iſſues of Life and Death, and who alone knoweſt the number of my days, which thy Wiſdom has conceal'd from me; yet do I perceive my Spirits are continually waſting, and the Weakneſſes and Diſeaſes to which I am liable, are as ſo many kind Monitors to put me in mind of my Diſſolution. I know, O Lord, the hour will ſhortly come, 'tis flying to me apace upon the Wings of Time, when I muſt reſign my Breath, and quit this lower Habitation, for an endleſs one in Eternity. O then let me improve this certainty of my Death, to all happy advantages of my Soul. Let the ſenſe of my own Weakneſs, add to the

Strength

Strength of my Faith, and the faculties of my Soul grow more intenſe, the nearer approaches my Body makes towards the Grave. 'Twill be, O Lord, the ſevereſt Tryal I ſhall meet with here, and unleſs thou in Mercy wilt ſtand by me in my laſt Agonies, I can't help being afraid of thoſe envious Powers that will then be buſie about my Bed for my Deſtruction. O! let nothing be able to diſturb and terrify me, have me in thy Cuſtody, O Holy Father! *For nothing can take me out of thy Hands*; give thy Holy Angels charge to ſtand about me, to guard and receive my poor Soul at my departure, and to conduct and carry it to the Bleſſed Receptacles of Reſt and Peace. And tho', O Lord, I am wholly Ignorant, by what manner of Death, thou haſt determin'd in thy Wiſdom to take me hence, yet ſuffer me to pray, it may neither be ſudden or untimely; but give me in thy Mercy, ſome previous Notice of my Summons, and Grace to improve my ſhort remainder of Life, in thoſe Holy Duties and Pious Thoughts 'tis fit for a dying Man to have. If it be thy Gracious Will, make my Pains ſhort and my Death eaſie, at leaſt not extremely tedious and grievous to me; but if thou haſt otherwiſe order'd, thy Bleſſed Will be done; only give me Patience to bear them, and the Comforts of thy Spirit under them, and at thine own time,

time, make my Death my Paſſage to a Joyful Reſurrection, and a Bleſſed and Eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XLIV.

Comfortable Thoughts upon the Death of Friends.

1 Theſ. IV. 13.

I would not have you be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

REaſon with thy ſelf, O Pious Soul, upon the Mercies of thy Redemption by the Death and Sufferings of thy Saviour Chriſt, and thou wilt have no reaſon to be afraid of the Terrours of Death. If the Agonies that ſhall attend the ſeparation of thy Soul from thy Body are apt to affright thee at the Thoughts of them, let the Power thy Saviour has over Death it ſelf, diſpel all thy fears. The Contemplations of a *Meſſiah*, and the merits of the Son of God, will have efficacy enough in them to turn all the bitter Pains of dying, into ſweet and Divine Extacies at the

the time of thy Diſſolution. Let this Saviour then be thy greateſt comfort, who has himſelf aſſur'd thee, *That whoſoever keepeth his ſayings, ſhall not ſee Death for Ever.* The Life we lead here is full of trouble, and we labour under the weight of many miſeries that attend it, 'tis Mercy therefore in God that we can find any comforts to alleviate the Thoughts of them. When the Chriſtian dyes, it is not properly he, but his Miſeries that have an end; what we call Death, is but taking our Journey into another World, and ought rather to be look'd upon as our Paſſage from one State to another, than to be call'd our quitting this. Our Friends and Relations are not loſt to us when they dye, we do but ſend them a little while before us, they are ſtill alive, and are as it were riſen in a new *Hemiſphere*; they are ſet out earlier than we indeed, but they have not left us for ever, nor ſo gone as never to meet again: The Good Man does but ſhift his Habitation, and repeat Life under a new Climate; our loſs of him which we ſo much lament, is his gain and greateſt happineſs. Indeed in this ſenſe our Friends may be ſaid to dye, in that all their Sins, Toils, and Miſeries have then an end, and they no longer increaſe their Guilt, endure Afflictions, or ſtruggle with the hardſhips of Life: They dye in Faith, and by this means we ſhou'd look upon them,

as

as gone from a Life clouded with Sorrows, into a Life that is truly ſo, without the leaſt mixture or allay of Grief; from *Darkneſs* into *Light*, from converſing with Men to the contemplation of their Maker. We are all Paſſengers embark'd in the ſame Veſſel while we live here, Death is the Haven we are bound for, where all Storms will be blown over our Heads, and we ſhall Ride ſafe from the Tempeſts of a troubled World; we have no reaſon then to Grieve, but rather Congratulate the arrival of our Friends into ſo ſafe an Harbour, after the many Dangers they have undergone of being caſt away. The Soul is kept under an uneaſy confinement while it lives with the Body, but Death is the happy means of her enlargement; and it was this Conſideration, that made good Old *Simeon* cry out, *Now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace.* He was uneaſy to be releas'd, and have his Chains knock'd off, and his Soul ſet at Liberty from the Priſon of his Fleſh: What matter of Joy then, muſt this afford us, when we conſider our departed Friends, as thoſe that have gain'd their freedom from the Slavery and Reſtraints of Life. 'Twas this rais'd that paſſionate deſire in the Breaſt of the Apoſtle, *to be diſſolv'd*, as being ſenſible to what Miſery he was confin'd while he continu'd in the Fleſh; and ſhall we lay it ſo heavily to Heart, that our Friends have broke

broke looſe from their Fetters, and have their Souls enlarg'd from their Earthly Priſons? Shall we Cloath our ſelves with Mourning Weeds, when they have put on the White and Joyful Garments of Triumph? For their Innocency is brightly array'd, and Palms of Victory adorn their Hands. Shall we then ſwell our Eyes with Tears, and pine away with Sighs for them, *from whoſe Eyes God has wip'd away all Tears for ever?* Shall we mourn for them, and in our ſorrow create freſh troubles to our ſelves, who are retired into thoſe Bleſſed receptacles of Joy and Peace, where there is no more Pain nor Sorrow, no doleful accents of Grief and Anguiſh to be heard, but an Eternal Reſt and Repoſe from all their Labours? Shall the Death of thoſe ſwell our Thoughts to an exceſs of Grief, while they themſelves are fill'd with exceſſive Joy, and bleſs'd in the Society and Converſation of Angels? Shall we fill our Houſes with diſmal cries and mournful lamentations for the loſs of them, who with Harps and Viols are chanting out Melodious Songs of Praiſe *to the Great God, and to the Lamb that ſitteth upon the Throne for ever?* Is it fitting that liberty from the Body ſhou'd be the Subject of our Grief, which is the Joyful Theme upon which they ſpend their Praiſes, and Congratulate one anothers Happineſs? Our Saviour's Anſwer

to

to his Diſciples, who cou'd not but have very Melancholy Thoughts at the propoſal of his leaving them, may convince us of the advantages we ſhall gain by our exchange of this Life for a better. *If ye loved me*, ſays he, *ye would likewiſe rejoice.* Suppoſe thy ſelf in the midſt of a Raging and Tempeſtuous Storm, where the Sea ran high, and thou wert every moment threatned to be ſwallow'd up of the Waves, woud'ſt thou not be willing to make the firſt Harbour thou coud'ſt find to ſave thee from the Winds? Behold the World in which thou art a Paſſenger reels and gives way under thee, and diſcovers the nearneſs of its diſſolution, not only by its decay, but in that *the end of all things is at hand*; And art thou not thankful to God, and pleas'd upon thy Friends account, and at their Happineſs, that he in Mercy has taken them away by a timely Death, from thoſe Storms and Ruin that was juſt hanging over their Heads, and gathering for their fall? In whoſe hands canſt thou intruſt thy ſafety more ſecurely, than in the Arms of thy Redeemer? Where can thy Soul dwell more at eaſe from all Violence and Injury, than in the Pleaſures of a Paradiſe above? A far different Notion of *Death* had the *Apoſtle*, than we generally have, when he call'd it *Gain*. Gain doubtleſs to the Righteous, to have eſcap'd that greater

greater Account which living longer in the World wou'd have added to their Sins, to be taken away from the Evil to come, and to have paſſed into a far much better change of their condition. We will allow thy Friends to have had all thoſe good Qualities that cou'd make them dear to thee, and that thou haſt loſt the very darling of thy Boſom; let thy Love be the greater to that God upon their accounts, who has been ſo graciouſly pleas'd in Love to take them to himſelf. Think not hardly of, nor murmur againſt him, who has taken nothing from thee, but what was at firſt his own gift, 'twas his, not thine. Think it a piece of Juſtice readily to reſign, and pay back what was only lent you. 'Tis he alone can foreſee the Evils that are coming upon the World; and 'tis an inſtance of his indulgent Providence towards thoſe he has taken from thee, that it was to reſcue them from the *Miſeries* that wou'd otherwiſe have faln on them in a *ſinful World.* Thoſe that *die in the Lord* ſleep peaceably in their Graves while thoſe they leave behind them often feel the weight of thoſe Judgments, (which were but impending when they left us) and that even in the Palaces of Kings. If the dearneſs of thy Friends adds to thy Grief for the loſs of them, believe me, thou ſhalt one day find them again, with an advance of every thing

that can render them much dearer to thee than they cou'd be here. 'Tis but a ſhort ſpace of time this Divorce between you is to laſt, and then a Bleſſed and ever Durable Eternity, ſhall joyn you together again, never more to be parted. For our Hope is built upon the never failing Promiſe of God; That when we ſhall depart hence, as ſome of thoſe have done that are gone before, we ſhall at laſt come into that Bleſſed ſtate of Life, where our Friends and Relations will be the dearer to us, for the more intimate acquaintance we had with them here, and be belov'd, without the leaſt fear of differing in our Sentiments and Opinions for ever.

In that Bleſt Day, from ev'ry Part the Juſt,
Rais'd from the Liquid Deep, or Mould'ring Duſt,
The various Products of Time's fruitful Womb,
All of Paſt Ages, Preſent, and to Come,
In full Aſſembly ſhall at once Reſort,
And meet within high Heaven's Capacious Court:
Their Famous Names Rever'd in Days of Old
Our Great Forefathers there, we ſhall behold,
From whom old Stocks and Anceſtry began,
And Worthily in long Succeſſion Ran;

The Reverend Sires with pleaſure ſhall we greet,
Attentive hear, while faithful they Repeat
Full many a Vertuous Deed, and many a
Noble Feat.
There, all thoſe tender Tyes which here below,
Or Kindred, or more Sacred Friendſhip know,
Firm, conſtant, and unchangeable ſhall grow.
Refin'd from Paſſion and the Dregs of Senſe,
A better, truer, dearer Love from thence,
Its everlaſting Being ſhall commence;
There, like their Days, their Joys ſhall ne'er
be done,
No Night ſhall riſe, to ſhade Heav'ns glorious
Sun;
But one Eternal Holy day go on.

Let not therefore thy uneaſy Thoughts dwell ſo much upon the Time thy Friends took their laſt Farewell of thee in this World, but look forward to that Happy Day when they ſhall be reſtor'd thee again, when the Earth ſhall reſign its dead at the Reſurrection of Mankind. Where there is a firm Belief that our Bodies ſhall riſe again, our Eyes will not be fix'd upon the Terrors of Death; but carry our Proſpect on, to that Reſt and Eternal Quiet, that ſhall open to us at that Day. The ordinary Revolu-

tions of Nature, make ſome Impreſſions of this upon our Thoughts: The Day dies into Night, and riſes again in the Luſtre of the next Morning Sun. The Plants lie buried in the Earth, and undergo the cold Death of Winter; but diſcover, as it were, a New Life, when warm'd by the kind Influences of the Spring. The Seaſons of the Year have their certain Periods, and make way for a conſtant Succeſſion. The Fruit drops from its Branches, and is renew'd by a yearly ſupply of the ſame Nature. The Seeds of the Earth corrupt, that they may become fruitful; and the Fields are cover'd with an alternate Reſurrection. And while we have ſuch lively Reſemblances before us, can we think God deſign'd them for us to paſs them by, and make no Reflections upon our ſelves? Shall Nature be thought thus powerful in the Production of ſuch ſtrange and ſurprizing Alterations; and ſhall we aſcribe leſs Ability to God to raiſe our Bodies, who has promis'd that he one Day will? He that enlivens the Corn we eat, and from a corrupted Grain that periſhes in the Earth ſuſtains our Bodies, will much more raiſe Man at the laſt Day, to whom he has promis'd an Eternal Life. God has call'd his Faithful Servants to their repoſe, in the darkſome Lodgings of the Grave; do not

tho

thou envy them the ſweet Reſt they enjoy there, have but a little Patience and they ſhall riſe again. Perhaps thou wert pleaſing thy ſelf, that theſe Friends of thine, which are taken from thee, might have lived to have been Ornaments to, and uſeful Members of the Church Militant here on Earth; but it was the Divine Pleaſure, to make them more glorious Members of the Church Triumphant; let thy Will in this, ſubmit to that of his. Thou might'ſt feed thy ſelf with Hopes that, had they lived, they wou'd have diſtinguiſh'd themſelves for Eminency of Learning, and deep Reſearches into the Secrets of Nature; but it has pleas'd God to admit them to the very Fountain of Wiſdom, without all thoſe tedious and difficult Studies with which Human Learning is attended: Let thy fooliſh hopes give way to unerring Wiſdom. Or perhaps thou wert pleaſing thy ſelf with the gawdy Thoughts of Honours and Preferments, cut out in thy Mind for theſe Friends thou ſo much condoleſt the Loſs of; but has not God provided better for them, by their Promotion into the Company and Society of Bleſſed Spirits and Holy Angels? Is there not Mercy in this, and Preſumption in thee, to go about to contradict thy Father's Pleaſure? But if none of theſe, perhaps thou hadſt Thoughts one Day to ſee them loaded with

the Riches of the World, and under the Adorations that are generally made to Men of large Fortunes; but it has pleas'd God to give them greater, infinitely far greater Treaſures, without the Cares and Fears that go along with the acquiſition of them: Let therefore an entire ſubmiſſion to the Will of God, take place of all fond and fooliſh Expectations of thine. And with the ſame Reſignation with Holy *Job*, allay all thy Diſcontents: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, Bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.*

The Prayer.

O Great and Merciful God, whoſe Will is govern'd by the Eternal Rules of unerring Wiſdom, let my entire Reſignation to whatever thy Providence ſhall think fit to order, ſhew my dependance upon, and perfect ſubmiſſion to thy Government over me. Let not my Fears of that Death thou haſt ordain'd for me, nor the uneaſy Thoughts at the loſs of my deareſt Friends, prevent my turning all theſe Diſpenſations of thy Wiſe Providence, to the Spiritual Advantages and Comforts of my Soul. The loſs of my deareſt Children, is indeed a ſore Affliction, eſpecially when I reflect upon it as a Puniſhment for my Sins;

Sins; but I doubt not but what is my Grief, is their unſpeakable Joy, whom thou haſt in Mercy convey'd into Paradiſe out of a troubleſome World, before they ſo much as knew the Troubles and Miſeries of it. For this then, and for all other thy Dealings with me and mine, I have truly reaſon to be thankful. And never ſuffer me, O Lord, by any Effects of an unreaſonable ſorrow, to argue with my ſelf againſt that Faith I profeſs to have, in the certainty of a Future State. 'Tis but a ſhort time I have to live here, let thy Grace teach me to improve it ſo, that I may live with thee for ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XLV.

Of the Day of Judgment.

2 Cor. V. 10.

For we muſt all appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt.

THE *Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son.* I know therefore, O Bleſſed Jeſu, that thou wilt one Day come a ſtrict and impartial Judge; when the Secrets of Mens Hearts

ſhall be reveal'd, and all they have *done* in the Fleſh, their very *Words* and *Thoughts* ſhall be ſet in a clear and open light. How awful ſhall the Terrors of that Day appear? When above me thou ſhalt open this dreadful Judgement, with ſeverity in thy Looks towards the Wicked, when Hell ſhall extend its wide Jaws, to receive me in my Fall, a gnawing Conſcience preying upon my Spirits, a flaming World crackling about my Ears, on one ſide of me my Sins drawn up againſt me, on the other, hideous Fiends waiting for the direful Word, and the Good and Evil Angels all around me; the one guarding Heaven from the prophane approaches of the Wicked, and the other dragging their unwilling Souls into the dark Abyſs? O Lord Jeſu, to whom ſhall I have recourſe in theſe Perplexities I ſhall be in at this dreadful Day? I can find no Comfort from the Actions of my paſt Life, for I know there will then be no Mercy for the wilful Sinner. I ſhall then hang between Time and Eternity, the one is irrecoverably gone, and the unmeaſurable Tracts of the other my Thoughts can never reach. Spiteful Spirits will demand Sentence upon thoſe Sins into which their Malice had too fatally betray'd me, they will expoſe to the Scrutiny of a ſtrict Judgment, whatever may increaſe my Torments, and

aſſign

assign me over to their own accurs'd Company. At this Day *all the Hosts of Heaven shall be dissolv'd, and the Heavens shall be rolled together as a Scroll,* and the Stars shall fall from their Sockets, like Leaves in Autumn; *the Sun shall be turn'd into Blood, and the Moon be confounded.* And, O Lord, if these Things, that are the Works of thy Hands, not capable of Good or Evil, shall be involv'd in the general Ruin of this Day, and shrink away at thy Presence, How shall I, sinful Man that I am, be ever able to stand in Judgment, or lift up my Head before thee? The Heaven of Heavens is *not pure in thy sight,* How then shall I, *who have drank in, Iniquity like Water?* And *if the Righteous scarcely are saved, Where shall the Ungodly and Sinner appear?* Whither then, in this my Distress, shall I seek for Refuge, but to thy self, O Lord? 'Tis thou who art to censure my Sins, thou who hast in Mercy given up thy self a Sacrifice for them; for *thy Father Judgeth no Man, but has committed all Judgment to thee his Son.* Here then is all my Hopes, seeing I am to have that *Son* of his to be my Judge, who was himself contented to be deliver'd up for those very Sins for which I am to appear before him; *For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son,* not to condemn the World, *but that the*

World through him might be ſaved. How merciful then, O Lord, may I hope thy Judgment will be towards me, when my Salvation was the Bleſſed Meſſage upon which thy Father ſent thee into the World? Thou did'ſt in every thing fulfil the Will of him that ſent thee, Why then ſhou'd I fear thou wilt leave that part of it, which relates to my Salvation alone unfiniſh'd? 'tis not thy Father's Will, that *one of his Little Ones ſhou'd periſh.* Behold I am little in thy ſight, and of no eſteem in my own; for what can I boaſt of, but a Compoſition of Duſt and Aſhes? nay, leſs than this, for I ſhrink to nothing in my own Thoughts, when I conſider how ſhort a Progreſs I have made in the way of Godlineſs. O do thou ſupply my Defects, and make room for the gracious Will of thy heavenly Father. Thou cameſt down, O Holy Jeſu, to ſave that which was loſt, Why then ſhou'd I fear the rigour of thy Judgment towards him who earneſtly deſires to be ſaved? My Sins will put in bitter things againſt me, and call upon thee for a ſevere Sentence; but behold thou haſt in Mercy taken theſe Sins upon thy ſelf, and bore the weight of them on thy Croſs. Thou art that *Lamb that takeſt away the Sins of a whole World,* Why ſhou'd I miſtruſt that mine ſhou'd be excluded? Was not thy Death of value enough

enough to ſave me? And ſhall my Sins only receive Puniſhment, when thy Ranſom was of a Univerſal Merit? If, O Bleſſed Jeſu, thou wilt be ſo ſevere when thou comeſt to Judgment, as to *mark every thing I have done amiſs*, and condemn me for it, What cou'd force thee to leave thy Father's Right-hand above, to ſubmit thy ſelf to the Infirmities of my Nature, and the bitter Agonies of thy Croſs? The Devils will come in againſt me, and demand from my Soul an Account of all their ſinful Inſinuations; but, to my comfort, *the Prince of this World is already judg'd, nor has he any Part in me.* The ſame Power of thine that cou'd drive him from thee, ſhall protect me from all his Malice; for my Faith in thee, O Lord, has made an indiſſoluble Union between us. While thou diſdaineſt not to call me thy Friend, and rank me among thy Brethren, and by thy Spirit haſt made me one with thee, How far ſhort will his accuſation reach, when thou, the beloved Son of God, muſt be involv'd in the ſame Impeachment? The Friendſhip thou art pleas'd to Honour me with, and the near Relation I have to thee, How ſhall not theſe plead in my defence, when thou comeſt to Judge me? The Law will appear at this Day againſt me; That will call me *accurs'd*, for I have not *kept all that*

was

was commanded in it; but thou, my Chriſt, becameſt a *Curſe* for me, that I might be *freed from the Curſe of the Law*. The Curſes that are threatned there, ſhall be turn'd into the Bleſſings of thy Goſpel; for I am impatient, till I hear thoſe comfortable Words of my Judge pronounc'd in the joyful Accent of Love and Mercy: *Come ye Bleſſed Children of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World*. The Law will write bitter things againſt me, but thou wilt not be my Accuſer to thy Father; but a moſt powerful Advocate in my behalf. I am not then afraid of the Terrors of the Law, becauſe thou haſt *blotted out the Hand-writing that was againſt me*. The loſt and undone Wretches at that Day, will maliciouſly urge me guilty of the ſame Crimes for which they periſh: And I confeſs, O Lord, my Guilt had once made me too like them, but my Repentance, and the ſaving Knowledge of thee, my Saviour, has made a Happy difference between us: *He that heareth thy Word, and believeth on him that ſent thee, hath everlaſting Life, and ſhall not come into Condemnation*. Behold, O Lord, I hear thee, and my Faith is in thee alone, tho' weak and imperfect, yet ſtill 'tis Faith; *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief*, and do thou raiſe my Faith to the moſt exalted

pitch. And tho' I am not free from all thoſe Sins for which others periſh, yet thou wilt acquit me from that of Infidelity. Thus I have reaſon to be afraid of all theſe Witneſſes that will come in againſt me; but the Thoughts that I ſhall have thee for my Merciful Judge, raiſes my dejected Spirits, and gives me the greateſt Comfort. Into thy Hands the Father has deliver'd his Commiſſion for opening the Grand Aſſize, and left the Management of the Inqueſt to thy Righteous Judgment; to thine, whom he deliver'd up for our ſakes, nay, who waſt willing and contented to offer thy ſelf a Victim for thy Church, that *thou mighteſt ſanctifie and cleanſe it with the waſhing of Water, by the Word.* Why then ſhou'd we fear a rigorous Sentence to paſs upon us, from ſuch a Judge as thou wilt be to us, for whom thou gaveſt thy ſelf up to *Death, even the Death of the Croſs?* Thou wilt not hate thine own Fleſh; behold, Lord, we are Members of thy precious Body, *Fleſh of thy Fleſh, and Bone of thy Bone.*

The Prayer.

O Holy Jeſu, thou who art to be my Judge at the great Day of thy Appearance, when thou ſhalt ſit upon the Throne of thy Glory, and all Nations ſhall

be gather'd before thee, have Mercy upon me here, and ſo prepare me for this dreadful Day of ſtrict Judgment, that I may not be frightned at the Thoughts, nor confounded at the Terrors of it, when it ſhall come. Let me govern my Life with that due Care and Conſideration to what thou haſt made my Duty, that I may then be able to give up my Accounts with Joy, and not with Grief. Let me not delude my ſelf with the Commiſſion of the leaſt Sin, becauſe I know none will be ſo inconſiderable as to be over-look'd in that great and ſtrict Enquiry that ſhall be made into all the Actions of my Life. Let me not be ſo fooliſh and profane, as to truſt in the moſt ſecret Retirements from the World, or thoſe of my own Heart and Thoughts, to hide my ſelf and my Sins, from thy All-ſeeing Eye; for theſe ſhall all be expos'd to publick view, before Men and Angels, to my Eternal Infamy and Reproach. Let this Belief, O Lord, that I ſhall one Day ſtand before thy Tribunal, influence all the Actions of my Life, and be ever in my Thoughts, that in the laſt Day, when thou ſhalt come again in thy Glorious Majeſty, to judge both the Quick and Dead, I may riſe to the Life Immortal, and receive a joyful Sentence from the Mouth of thee, my Redeemer, who with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt liveſt for ever. *Amen.*

ME-

MEDITATION XLVI.

Desires after Happiness.

Psalm. LXXXIV. V. 1, 2.

How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!

My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord: My Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the living God.

'TIs not thy business O my Soul, to be enamour'd with a short-liv'd World, but to raise thy Affections to a Life that will never pass from thee, permanent, and durable. Let thy desires carry thee upward, where thou shalt be Eternally Young, without the least fears of ever stooping under the Infirmities of Old Age; lead a Life without the least apprehensions upon thee of dying any more, where thy Joy shall be free from the least mixture of Sorrow, and thy Reign admit of no Thoughts of a Revolution. If Beauty has any thing in it thou canst admire; behold thou shalt converse with the bright and refulgent Spirits of Just Men made Perfect: If Activity and Strength, there shalt thou see the Elect endued with that of Angels: If length of Days, and a freedom from the Diseases of Humane Nature;

ture; there ſhalt thou ſpend an Eternity without the leaſt Sickneſs to diſturb thy quiet: If thou would'ſt have nothing to diſappoint thee in all thy Soul can wiſh or deſire; there ſhall the Saints enjoy an unſpeakable Satisfaction, when the Lord ſhall manifeſt himſelf, and diſplay all the Glories of the Divine Preſence. If Muſick make any impreſſion upon thy Thoughts; there thou ſhalt hear the Bleſſed Angels join'd in a Melodious Choire, chanting forth their Makers Praiſes in Eternal Hallelujahs: If pure and refined Pleaſures can delight thee; 'tis there they flow clear and unmixt from the dregs of Senſe, and God will ſuffer us to take the largeſt draughts, without the fear of being overcharg'd or ſurfeited: If Wiſdom; thou ſhalt contemplate it in the boundleſs Perfection of the Divine Nature: If Friendſhip; thy Love of God ſhall there exceed all the Love thou can'ſt have for thy ſelf, and his for thee ſhall exceed thy imagination: If Harmony of Affections; there ſhall be nothing there, to break the Sacred ties of Concord, where one Will ſhall run through the Affections of that bleſt Company thou ſhalt have above: If Power; every thing there ſhall be eaſie to thee, thou ſhalt graſp at nothing above thy Strength, but thy Will ſhall be entirely regulated by that of God: If Riches and Honours affect thee; 'tis the goodneſs

goodneſs of God to reward his Faithful Servants with Government anſwerable to their fidelity here: If thou woud'ſt be in a State ſecur'd on all hands from a Relapſe; the Bleſſed above ſhall be as far out of danger of loſing their Heaven, as they themſelves can be of ever deſiring it, or the Love of God from taking it from them; And if he ſecures them, there is nothing above him to make the unwilling ſeparation between them and the Eternal enjoyment of their Maker. Their deſires ſhall meet with no diſappointments; for they ſhall be continually in the Preſence of that God, whoſe Beatifick Viſion is Happineſs it ſelf. The Bleſſings of that State are ſuch, as our Thoughts are not able to conceive the greatneſs of them, our Tongues expreſs their number, nor our Souls ſet that value upon them as they deſerve: There, ſhall our Bodies be for ever Sound and Healthful, our Minds Pure and Undiſturb'd, our Glories Unſullied, our Pleaſures Spiritual and always running in upon us with a full Tide, our Converſation be ever freſh amidſt the Bleſſed Company of Saints and Angels, and our whole Nature refin'd by the wonderful Power of God: The Pleaſant Situation of that happy Climate they ſhall Breath in, the ſweet intercourſes they ſhall entertain one another with, the glorify'd change of the Organs of their Body they ſhall then

happily

happily feel, their being plac'd ſo far above that World they ſo bravely deſpis'd, and the Miſeries of that Hell they have reſcued their Souls from; all theſe ſhall be the Eternal ſubject of their Joy. The meaneſt Crown with which our Head ſhall be adorn'd in that Bleſſed State, ſhall be preferable to a Thouſand Worlds; as far preferable as things Infinite can be to thoſe that are only Finite. Nor yet need we ſuſpect the leaſt envious thought to ariſe in our Breaſts at the different degrees of Happineſs we ſhall be bleſt with there; for we ſhall all have one and the ſame Love and Charity run through the whole Society, and 'tis this ſhall give us a true fellow-feeling of one anothers Bliſs, and ſet us all upon the ſame level in the mutual ties of our Affections. Heaven and Earth can ſhow us nothing Greater, nothing Happier than God; 'tis this then muſt make all our Joys perfect, when we ſhall ſee this immenſe Fountain of all happineſs, and enjoy him in the neareſt Communications our Souls are capable of; 'tis this that will make one ſingle interview of our Maker, tho' it were but for a moment, exceed all the Pleaſures of Senſe here, tho' we had Faculties large enough to take in the whole Circle of them at once. What a bleſt Viſion ſhall that be, when we ſhall contemplate him in all the Perfections of his

his Nature, have him himſelf within us to enlarge our perceptions of him, and we our ſelves made like him, by the moſt plentiful effuſions of the Divine Spirit? In our Paſſage through this World, we have indeed Chriſt going along with us but under the Myſteries of his Word and Sacraments, we are not ſo happy as to have a viſible knowledge of our Redeemer; but in Heaven we ſhall behold him *face to face*, when he ſhall feed us with that Bread which ſhall for ever ſatisfy us. The Diſciples that were travelling to *Emmaus*, knew not their Saviour while they were converſing with him on the Road; but when they came to their Inn, and had eat Bread with him, their Eyes were open, and this appearance fix'd their before ſtaggering Faith. The *Jeruſalem* that is above, has no Temple in it made with hands, no Sun nor Moon to ſupply a Light, where the *Shechinah* diſplays all the Glories of the immediate Preſence, and diffuſes its uncircumſcrib'd Rays through all the ſacred Pavement of the Court of God. There ſhall we ſee thoſe things, that were only the Objects of our *Faith* here; our *Hopes* be ſwallow'd up in fruition, and enjoy what we cou'd only *Love* before. There ſhall be an Eternal ſilence, no noiſe to diſturb our Reſt, but the Stones of this Spiritual building, like that of *Solomons*, ſhall be laid without

out the leaſt grating Sound; no Inſtruments to Poliſh and Refine, what were beforehand prepar'd for the Places they are to adorn, by the Great Maſter-builder's Hand. The Soul, with far greater Pomp than *Sheba*, came to viſit the wiſeſt of Kings, and behold the Grandeur of his Throne, ſhall make her ſolemn Entry amidſt a Throng of Angels, to the Embraces of her Redeemer, while her Vertues add a brighter Luſtre, than all the Embelliſhments of Art or Nature: She ſhall admire the Wiſdom of her great King, and be pleaſingly aſtoniſh'd at the Order of thoſe Bleſſed Spirits that attend about his Throne; the eternal *Manna*, with which their Tables are ever Spread; the unvaluable Garments with which they are cloath'd; Bodies diſcharg'd of the Infirmities of Fleſh, and endu'd with Spiritual Natures; the Beauty of their Habitations, the Magnificence of their Palace, the Multitude of thoſe Divine Praiſes they are for ever offering up as Sacrifices to their Maker; and amidſt all theſe amazing Sights, and the Tranſports of her Thoughts, ſhe ſhall ſurprizingly confeſs, they exceed what her Faith it ſelf cou'd not have conceiv'd, had ſhe not had this Bleſſed Conviction of her Eyes. Let the Soul then mount upon the Wings of Faith, and conſider what Bleſſings ſhe has in reverſion reſerv'd for

hers.

her in the Heavens. Let our Spirits open a Communication with that State, whither we are ſhortly to go our ſelves; and be ſetting out in time for thoſe Manſions, where ere long we muſt take up our abode for ever. Where there are no Deſires after, there ſhall be no Admiſſion into this Glory of our Lord. 'Tis thy Hopes, thou canſt not conceal them, that thou ſhalt one Day appear in the Preſence of God; Let Holineſs then be thy greateſt Care, for GOD himſelf, the End of all thy hopes, *is Holy.* Thou haſt Thoughts to be introduc'd into the Fellowſhip of Angels, look thou do'ſt not drive them by thy Sins from thoſe Stations in which they are appointed as Guardians over thee. Thy Hopes are fix'd upon *Eternal Things*, What have thy Affections then to do with *Things Temporal?* Thou ſeekeſt *a City that is to come*, Why art thou for entrenching thy ſelf here, as if thou waſt to live in this World for ever? 'Tis thy deſire *to be with Chriſt*, Why then ſhou'd thy Diſſolution create ſuch Fears within thee? Theſe are Fears that belong only to him who has no love for his Saviour, no willingneſs for his Happineſs. Thou art uneaſie to be detain'd from thy Entry into the *Jeruſalem that is above*, why art thou then taking ſuch Pains, by the Number of thy Sins, and the greatneſs of them, to unqualifie

fie thy ſelf for a Reception within thoſe ſacred Walls? when thy excluſion is recorded by that Decree of *Heaven*, *That nothing which is unholy ſhall enter there?* 'Tis what thy Soul deſires, that thou may'ſt hereafter enjoy the *Tree of Life*; lay hold of it then here, as it is held out to thee by thy Saviour, the very *Tree of Life*, by the Efficacy of a true Faith; for *Bleſſed are they that waſh their Garments in the Blood of the Lamb, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in thorough the Gates into the City. Without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters.* Take heed therefore, leaſt Immodeſty be thy ruin, leaſt Paſſion betray thee to exceſs of Anger, and Covetouſneſs ſink thy Soul into an Abyſs of Sorrow. If thou haſt any Deſires to be introduc'd to *the Marriage of the Lamb*, ſhow the reality of them, by thy impatient Prayers for his Appearance. Thou haſt a kind Invitation, for *the Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come, Rev.* 22. 17. If thou haſt not the *Earneſt of Spirit*, whereby to call for the *Coming of the Lord*, the Bridegroom will have no reaſon to admit ſuch a cold and indifferent Gueſt to the Celebration of his Nuptials. Wou'dſt thou be an Inhabitant of that New World that ſhall ſucceed this, Why are thy Affections then ſo firmly fix'd upon this periſhing State of Affairs? Wou'dſt thou ſhare in the

Glories

Glories of thy Maker, why then art thou ſo fond of theſe ſublunary things, that are of themſelves ſo poor and inſufficient? Do'ſt thou expect God ſhou'd one Day raiſe *thee up into a Building not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens*, Why then art thou unwilling, and ſo afraid this earthly Tabernacle of thine ſhou'd be diſſolv'd? Is it thy deſire to be *cloath'd upon* hereafter? If ſo, Why is it not thy greateſt Care leaſt thou be found naked and deſtitute of thoſe Divine Graces that muſt adorn thy Soul? If thou haſt not improv'd the gracious Deſigns of the whole Trinity in thy Redemption, and ſecur'd to thy ſelf ſome Portion of the Bleſſed Spirit in thy Heart, thou muſt never expect to be enlighten'd hereafter with the Glory of its unſpeakable Preſence. If thou haſt no reliſh here of that happy Communion between God and thy Soul, thou wilt be unfit to bear thoſe more plentiful Effuſions of this Spirit, who waſt ſuch a Stranger to him here.

The Prayer.

O Bleſſed, ever Bleſſed God, who inhabiteſt Eternity, and haſt prepar'd for them that love thee, a Happineſs beyond all their Conceptions, and in Mercy promis'd to reward our Obedience, with a Life of Eternal

Eternal Pleaſures in the Preſence of thy ſelf. How ſhall I expreſs the ardent Deſires of my Soul to be poſſeſs'd of this thy Bleſſedneſs? I confeſs, my Thoughts are infinitely too ſhort, my Affections too narrow, my Expreſſions too ſcanty, to comprehend and ſufficiently admire and Celebrate thy Glory, or that which thou haſt provided for me: But what my Thoughts cannot conceive, my Deſires, which are not to be bounded by any Object here, are more enflam'd to enjoy. O fix them upon that unſpeakable Bliſs, and raiſe them above all the tempting Allurements of this Life; help me to ſhake off the Corruptions of my ſinful Nature, and Plume my Wings for my happy flight to thoſe Bleſſed Regions of perfect Love, inexpreſſible Delight, and everlaſting Goodneſs. Impart, O Lord, a foretaſte of theſe Divine Pleaſures to my Soul, by the Communication of thy Spirit, and ſo refine my Affections, cleanſe away all my Droſs, and every thing that wou'd make me uncapable of enjoying thee, my God, that being pure and holy by the Merits of my Redeemer, I may be receiv'd into thy Eternal Glory. *For whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none on Earth that I deſire in Compariſon of thee.* Thou, O God, art my God, and my Portion for ever. *Amen.*

MEDI-

MEDITATION XLVII.

Of the Beatifick Viſion.

Pſalm XLII. 2.

When ſhall I come and appear before God?

IN my *Father's Houſe*, ſays our Saviour, *there are many Manſions.* O! how my Soul longs, O Lord, to be bleſs'd with the ſight of that Place where thou haſt prepar'd an abode for her, for ever! For *I am a Stranger and a Pilgrim here, as all my Fathers were. The days of my ſojourning are few and full of miſery*, and 'tis this that makes thy exil'd Servant long to be call'd home to his Father's Kingdom. *My Converſation is in Heaven*, therefore do *I deſire to ſee the Goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the Living. My Life paſſeth away as a ſhadow: My Days are all number'd in thy ſight, and my Subſtance is as nothing before thee.* Where then is *all my hope but in thee, O Lord?* O Holy Jeſu! when will the time come when I ſhall be with thee? When ſhall I appear in thy Preſence? *As the Hart panteth after the Waterbrooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God.* O thou full and perfect Joy! O thou Boundleſs Source of Happineſs! from whom alone we derive all we can call pleaſant and deſirable! When ſhall I make my Entry into

the immediate Presence of my God, and contemplate the Divine Majesty in thee, and thee in him? *Thou shalt make me exceeding glad*, O Lord, *with thy Countenance. There are Pleasures at thy right hand for evermore. Thou shalt fill me with the Plenty of thy House, and make me drink of thy Pleasures* as out of never failing Streams. *With thee is the Fountain of Life.* O wish'd for Life! O Happiness of all Happiness! in which the ever Blessed Trinity will be the absolute satisfaction of our Desires, the eternal Object of our Contemplations, the everlasting enjoyment of our Love, and the unwearied Subject of our Praises. The Sight of God shall transport us with greater Raptures than our Souls ever before felt. To see our Blessed Redeemer, to live for ever with him, and to hear him relate the mighty Transactions of our Redemption, shall raise our Hearts beyond what we are so much as able to wish or desire here. O Jesu Christ, thou dearest of my Soul! When, O when, wilt thou come to lead me into thy Royal Palace? What is there I can ask for there, that thou wilt not supply me with? Can I so much as Think, or Hope for any absent Good, where *God will be All in All? My sight* will there be charm'd with the *Beauty of his Holiness*, *my Taste* infinitely pleas'd with the Divine Sweets of my Spiritual repast, *my Ears* fill'd with an Eternal Harmony, *my Nostrils* draw in the Pleasant

Odours

Odours of Celeſtial Sacrifices, and I be gathering the Products of an Everlaſting Spring. Thus ſhall God be All in All, and diſpence the Bleſſings of that happy place to every one of us, according to the utmoſt deſires of our Souls. While God ſhall be the Almighty Supporter of thy Being, thou ſhalt have no fears upon thee that thy Life will waſte, thy Health decay, thy Peace be diſturb'd, or thy Honour taken from thee. Things conceal'd from the Great Fathers of the Church, the Myſteries of our Faith, and the reaſons of his Providence, ſhall be there eaſily ſolv'd by the meaneſt proficient in Divine Knowledge. Chriſt ſhall himſelf converſe with us in his Humane Nature, and in the moſt endearing manner explain all the hidden Myſteries of our Redemption. There ſhall be the moſt engaging Rhetorick in his Speech, the moſt amiable Beauty in his Looks, and a ſurprizing Gracefulneſs ever dwelling upon his Lips. And if God ſhall be thus all our Happineſs, he ſhall fill our Underſtandings with perfect Knowledge, ever be encreaſing the Satisfaction of our Wills, and enlivening our Memories through the endleſs tracts of Eternity. God the Son ſhall impart to us the fulleſt meaſures of Divine Knowledge; God the Holy Ghoſt influence our Wills by the moſt plentiful effuſions of his Love into our Hearts, and God the Father raiſe our never-failing memories with the

pleaſing Thoughts of what ſhare each of them bore in the Stupendious actions of our Redemption. *Thou O God, ſhalt be our light, in whoſe light we ſhall ſee light*; ſee thee in thy ſelf, in the *brightneſs of thy Countenance, when we ſhall behold thee Face to Face.* Live with thee for ever, Praiſe thee to all Eternity, be partakers of thy Joy, be made like unto Angels, and what is above all this, be like thy Bleſſed ſelf. Let my Soul be aſtoniſh'd for a while, and adore the Mercy of my Redeemer; of him, who not only has receiv'd thoſe who were at enmity with him, into the Gracious Terms of his Goſpel, but forgives our Sins, ſupplies our Imperfections with his own Righteouſneſs, makes us Heirs of Eternal Life, and not only ſets us upon a level with Angels, but conforms us to his own likeneſs. O Bleſſed Society! O Heavenly City of the Great God! O thou ſacred abode of the ever Bleſſed Trinity! When ſhall I tread the Courts of thy Holy Temple? When ſhall I be admitted into that neareſt Communion of the Lamb? Of thee, O Jeſu, who art that ſpotleſs Lamb, *who takeſt away the Sins of the World*, and waſt offer'd up for them before the Foundations of it? When ſhall I come to pay my Adorations to my God, in that thy Temple, and Worſhip God in Thee, and Thee in God? When ſhall that Sun riſe upon me, which diffuſes its boundleſs Light through all thy Courts above? I am as

one

one Baniſh'd from my Native Home, while I am wand'ring here, as in a Strange Land; but my Reverſion that is reſerv'd for me in my Father's Kingdom, is all my Comfort, all my Hope. 'Tis through the Mercy of my Saviour, that we that believe have Power *given us to become the Sons of God, and if Sons we ſhall alſo be heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt.* Raiſe thy groveling Affections, O my Soul, and aſpire after that which has been ſo Mercifully ſettled upon thee. *The Lord is the Portion of my Inheritance*, and my reward is truly great. What Greater than this cou'd the Merciful kindneſs of God beſtow upon me? He gives me Life, gives me his only Son, nay himſelf, and did he know any thing in Heaven or Earth beyond this, ſuch is his Mercy, he wou'd freely give it us. In him we live, we are Temples of his own raiſing, in which he vouchſafes to take his Habitation, our Hearts are in Poſſeſſion of him; but all this indeed is after a Myſterious manner while we live here, but ſhall be really made good to us hereafter, when our Hope ſhall actually enjoy what it could here only hope for; when we ſhall no longer be ſojourners for a while, but take up our Eternal Habitations never more to quit, never change thoſe Everlaſting Manſions. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O God, who art pleas'd to condescend to our weak apprehensions and reveal the Happiness of Heaven under such things, as the Soul of Man is most apt to value and admire: What is there, can raise my desires after this Happy State to a higher pitch, or more ardent Prayers for the enjoyment of it, than to be admitted into thy immediate Presence, to be like thee, and to be with my Blessed Saviour and Redeemer to all Eternity? Grant, O Lord, in Mercy I may not fall short of this so great Blessedness. Let thy Spirit be ever preparing me here, for this immense happiness; let not my Sins intercept the beams of Divine Light from my Soul, nor deprive me of thy sight for Ever. I am transported at the thoughts of it, and my Soul is ready to flie from me in those Raptures it raises in my Mind, when I meditate upon the Glories of my Redeemer, and the Conversation of Angels; But, Lord, let me so think of these Joys, as to consider that nothing which is unclean, nothing unholy, shall enter into thy Presence; let not therefore my Transports carry me so far out of my self, as not to know that I am a sinful Man, unfit for such a State of Purity, by reason of my defilements, and that Flesh and Blood cannot inherit thy Kingdom; but do

do thou transform me into thy likeneſs, Spiritualize my Nature, make me pure as thou art pure, and holy as thou art holy; and then, O Lord, I may add a Bleſſed hope to my deſires, that I ſhall be admitted into thy Preſence, there to See, Admire, Love, and Adore thee for Ever and Ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XLVIII.

Of the Happineſs of the Saints in Heaven.

Hebrews XII. 22.

Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels.

IN *the Reſurrection they ſhall neither Marry, nor be given in Marriage, but be as the Angels of God in Heaven.* What Tongue is able to expreſs the Happineſs of theſe Bleſſed Souls? What Panegyrick can reach ſo Sublime a Subject? What Heart is large enough to conceive all the Glories of this Happy State? When our Bodies ſhall riſe out of the duſt at the final Summons of the Dead, and be glorified by the Almighty Power of God, they ſhall be admitted into the immediate Preſence of their Maker, *This corruptable ſhall*

put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall put on immortality. I have ſeen God Face to Face, ſays Holy Jacob, *and my Life is preſerv'd*; But if ſo tranſient and momentary a view, cou'd be matter of ſo joyful a Tranſport, what ſhall the Beatifick Viſion of him for ever be? If the ſight of God vail'd under the appearance of a Man, cou'd raiſe ſuch lively Thoughts, more ſure ſhall the Glories of his Divine Nature, diſplay'd with all the Majeſty of his Godhead: What additions can ſuch a Happineſs as this admit of? What more than God can our Souls ſo much as wiſh for? Nor ſhall the bleſt and moſt engaging Society of Angels be the leaſt part of the happineſs of that ſtate; for beſides the Converſation we ſhall have with thoſe Pure and Holy Spirits, we ſhall be like them in their Natures, Active in our Bodies, Immaterial in our Souls, and Immortal in our Beings. We ſhall appear before the Throne of the Lamb in the ſame White Robes of Innocency with them, and join in the ſame everlaſting Song of Praiſe to our Great God: Our Vertues ſhall add the ſame Luſtre to our Crowns, and our Joy will be, that we are made partakers of the ſame immortal Privileges with theſe happy Souls. *We ſhall ſurely dye,* ſaid Manoah, *for we have ſeen the Angel of the Lord:* But no ſuch fearful apprehenſions ſhall reach our Souls, in a Place, were we ſhall ſee *Myriads of Angels*, and live

live for ever. Having once put on the Angelick Nature, we may baniſh all our fears of ever falling from this likeneſs, or turning Apoſtates to our own Happineſs. We ſhall be ſtripp'd of all the Propenſity of our Nature to what is Sinful, and our Native Innocence *be cloath'd with the Garments of Salvation.* There ſhall be nothing to hurt us, no Paſſions to diſturb, no Envy to diſtract us, no Luſt to fire, nor Ambitions after Honours or Power to trouble the ſweet Tranquility of our Minds. The weight of our Sins ſhall no more ſit heavy upon our Thoughts, nor ſhall we drain our Eyes for Tears to wipe off the defilements of them, nor fear thoſe deadly Wounds they were once us'd to impreſs upon our Souls; all theſe has our Powerful Redeemer overcome, and to his Strength we owe all our Victories. Again, let us improve this our likeneſs to theſe Bleſſed Spirits to ſuch comfortable Contemplations of our Happineſs, that our Bodies will then ſtand in no need of thoſe conſtant Reparations of our Health by which we are forc'd to ſupport them here. God ſhall be our Great repaſt, and the entire ſatisfaction of our Souls; he ſhall feed us with himſelf, and our Appetites ſhall never cloy, but our Delights grow ever freſh upon our hands. *There ſhall be neither hunger nor thirſt any more,* no Sun nor heat, no Tryals of Afflictions, no Perſecuting Sufferings to tempt our Faith, but we

ſhall be ſhelter'd under the Wings of Mercy, and refreſh'd *at the Fountain of living Waters*, that ſhall flow in a conſtant and never-failing Succeſſion of Eternal Streams. Our Table ſhall be ſpread with the moſt refin'd Dainties, on which we ſhall feed with Mirth unſpeakable, and expreſs our Thankfulneſs in the loudeſt ſhouts of Joy and Praiſe. O Bleſſed Jeſu, make all theſe things Good to us, in the trueſt and moſt Spiritual Senſe; let us *drink of the fruit of that Vine that grows in thy Father's Kingdom. Thy words are Spirit and Life*, and in that Goſpel thou haſt left behind thee, thou doſt reveal to us thoſe future Joys that await thy faithful Servants in another World. If there we ſhall be as Angels, the fears of Death ſhall no more have Power over us, that Enemy of ours ſhall be *ſwallow'd up in Victory*, its ſting pluckt out for ever, and all tears wip'd from our Eyes by the Merciful Hand of our Good God. Our Joy ſhall be free from the leaſt alloy of Sorrow; our Health know no Pain, our Life no Uneaſineſs, and our Eternal Day have no Clouds to ſhade or overcaſt its Light. Our Love ſhall be always freſh, our Joy grow more intenſe by its continuance, no ſighs ſhall ſo much as whiſper out any Eternal Senſe of Diſcontent; in ſhort, no ſtrokes of Sorrow ſhall appear upon our Looks, but we ſhall be ever Pleaſant, ever pleas'd. 'Tis there alone we ſhall be ſecur'd from all relapſe, enjoy an undeſturb'd

undeſturb'd Tranquility, be ever in a Calm, Happy as far as Infinite delights can make us ſo, know no end of Bliſs, but be carried through the boundleſs Circle of Divine Pleaſures to all Eternity. There ſhall we ſee the Adorable Trinity, under the Myſtery of Three Perſons, but one God Bleſſed for ever. O Carry thy Thoughts to an exalted pitch, O my Soul, and more nearly meditate for a while, upon that Honour our Redeemer has conferr'd upon us! When we ſhall join the Glorious Company of Angels and Arch-Angels, ſit with thoſe Happy Spirits upon Heavenly Thrones, partake with them in the Domions that are above, be converſant with Principalities and Powers, and not only ſo, but be like them in all the Glories of the Angelick Nature. There ſhall we gratefully acknowledge the tender care of our Guardian Angel over us, his faithful diſcharge of the Divine Will in our Protection from the Dangers of an Evil World: Nor ſhall we any more ſtand in need of his Aſſiſtance, but his Commiſſion ſhall be Cancell'd, and we become Colleagues in the ſame Eternal Joys. We ſhall want no Angel to guard onr Heads, we ſhall be Surrounded with the Hoſt of Heaven, liſted under the One ſame great Commander, and admire to behold our ſelves transform'd into the Spiritual likeneſs of ſuch glorious Beings. Theſe frail, weak, and mortal Bodies of ours,

ſhall

ſhall be chang'd, and in an inſtant become Spiritual, Active, and Immortal. They ſhall be enlighten'd by the nearneſs they ſhall be in to the Divine Preſence of God, *who dwelleth in inacceſſible Light, and is cloathed with Light as with a Garment.* They ſhall be incorruptible, as having put on the Nature of Angels, nay the ſame Glorified Bodies with their Redeemer. *They are here ſown in Corruption, they ſhall be raiſed in Incorruption; they are ſown in diſhonour, they ſhall be raiſed in Glory; they are ſown in Weakneſs, they ſhall be raiſed in Power; they are Sown a Natural Body, they ſhall be rais'd a Spiritual Body,* whoſe Luſtre ſhall be Eternal, like that of the Firmament they Breath in. Come, Lord Jeſu, come and receive us into the participation of this Glorious State. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

O Glorious God, whoſe Throne is Surrounded with Thouſands and Ten Thouſands of Holy Angels, whom thou haſt created Eternally to Praiſe thee, and to be our Companions in the Bliſsful Manſions of the Righteous; I thy humble Creature, proſtrate at thy Footſtool with a juſt Confuſion before thee, in whoſe Preſence theſe Bleſſed Spirits vail their Faces, do confeſs, my unworthineſs makes me altogether unfit for ſo Holy a Converſation, unleſs thou in Mercy by thy Spirit and

and the Merits of my Redeemer, recover me to my native Innocence, and repair the Corruptions of my fal'n Nature. Let my Repentance, O Lord, waſh away my Defilements, and thy Spirit lead me into all the Duties of a moſt Holy Life, that when I ſhall come to join this Bleſſed Company, as I truſt in thy Infinite Mercy I ſhall at the Reſurrection of the Juſt, I may be receiv'd by them with all the Joy of a Repenting Sinner, and with them Eternally Praiſe, Admire, and Adore thy unſpeakable Mercies to my Soul, in and through the Merits of my Redeemer, who with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, liveth for Ever, one God, World without end, *Amen.*

MEDITATION XLIX.

Of Hell Torments.

Mark IX. 44.

Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.

CAſt thy Thoughts, O my Soul, upon the Infernal Torments of the Damn'd, conſider the weight of thoſe Puniſhments to which they are for ever doom'd; and 'twill lead thee to ſet an effectual reſtraint

ſtraint upon thoſe ſinful Pleaſures which have ſuch a diſmal Reverſion entail'd upon them. A Place where Miſery ſhall reſide for ever, and the leaſt glimpſe of Happineſs be eternally excluded. What is there we can call Puniſhment, which ſhall not be there where Sin, the greateſt Miſery itſelf, ſhall go along with us. And what ſo much as ſhadow of Happineſs ſhall there be in our Excluſion from the Divine Preſence? Lay the diſmal Idea before thy Eyes, and ſuppoſe thy ſelf in the midſt of Flames, not the leaſt beam of light to comfort thee, but an Eternal Darkneſs ſpread through the Immenſe Void that is above thy Head, clouds of Smoke riſing from the dark Abyſs, and thy Ears entertain'd with the doleful cries of Torment, terrible and deform'd Fiends before thy Eyes, one continued howl thy only Muſick, dry and thirſty amidſt thy heat, but nothing to relieve thee, Sulphurous Vapours riſing through the infected Air, the guilty Worm preying upon thy Conſcience, Fear, Pain, and a juſt Confuſion upon thy Spirits at the reflection on thy Sins, Envy at the Happineſs of Saints, an accurs'd Rancour in thy Soul, Sorrow not to be expreſs'd, and God at an Eternal Diſtance from thee, and no Hope, no Expectation, no Thoughts that thy Miſeries ſhall ever have an End. The Light of that Fire ſhall, by the Almighty Power of God

God, be ſeparated from it, and it ſhall loſe its conſuming Nature, ſo that there will be no hopes of thy ever being reduced to Aſhes, but Sinners ſhall be its never-waſting Fewel. All the Light that ſhall afford them, will be ſo far from giving them any Comfort, or repreſenting any pleaſing Object to their Sight, that it ſhall ſerve only to increaſe their Miſery, and enhance their Sorrows. The Sun, Moon and Stars, ſhall be ever hid from their *Eyes*, much more the Viſion of their *deſpis'd* Redeemer, and of thoſe Bleſſed Saints that attend about his Throne; Inſtead of theſe they ſhall ſmart with Tears, be ſtifl'd in Smoke, and have nothing to look on but frightful Spectres, and the ghaſtly Countenances of all in the ſame Condition with themſelves: Their *Ears* ſhall be ever fill'd with Shrieks and Blaſphemies, and the horrid bellowings of Infernal Devils. Their *Palates* ſhall be parch'd with Thirſt and Hunger, ever gnawing upon their Bowels; But not ſo much as a drop of Water ſhall be there, to allay the one, nor the ſmalleſt Crumb to appeaſe the cravings of the other. *Their Smell* ſhall be entertain'd with nothing but a noiſom Stench ariſing from the Infernal Lake. Their Senſe of *feeling* ſhall be intenſe, and rack'd with piercing Flames, that ſhall boyl the very Marrow of their Bones. A hideous deformity ſhall overſpread their *Bodies*,

dies, and they themſelves become unactive and unweildy. Their *Memories* ſhall be perplex'd with the Thoughts of their paſt Sins; nor ſhall their former Crimes create them ſo much Torture to their Minds, as having loſt their darling Pleaſures. Their Pains ſhall admit of no Compariſon of a lighter Sorrow, when one ſpark of Hell ſhall inflame their Grief, beyond the continued Pangs of a Woman in her travail, tho' *protracted* to a thouſand Years. *Weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth* ſhall expreſs the pain and inward Rage of their tormented Souls. Conſcience ſhall be ever raiſing freſh Reflections to laſh their guilty Minds, and add to the racking Pains of their glowing Fleſh. There's not a Vice but ſhall be diſtinguiſh'd by the proper Marks of its own Puniſhment. This State ſhall be the very reverſe of Heaven; for as there we ſhall deſire nothing, but what we ſhall find; ſo here we ſhall find nothing, that we ſhall deſire. 'Twill be no mitigation to the anguiſh of theſe poor Wretches, that they once liv'd in the Enjoyment of all the Delicacies of this Life; nay, the remembrance of theſe their *good Things*, ſhall rather enhance their Sorrow, for the abuſe and loſs of them. Nor will all the Riot and Exceſs they ſo much pleaſed themſelves with here, avail them any thing now, when they ſhan't be able ſo much as to obtain one drop of Water

to

to cool their parching Tongues. The Richneſs of their Equipage, and the gawdy Figure they made in the World, will now add nothing to their eaſe, but be chang'd for the odious Coverings of Shame and Confuſion. Their ſplendid Titles, and Poſts of Honour, ſhall take no place, where all ſhall be ſet upon the ſame level of Miſery and Grief. The Treaſures they with ſo much ſolicitous Care had amaſs'd to themſelves here, ſhall not be able to purchaſe a Moments Reſpite from their Pain, where all the Inhabitants of thoſe darkſom Regions ſhall be equally poor, equally miſerable. And what ſhall be a Puniſhment above all their Sufferings, they ſhall be ſunk into an unconceivable diſtance from the Preſence of God, one Tranſient View of whoſe Countenance, would have vertue enough in it, to remove all Senſe of pain, and diſpel even the greateſt of all their Torments. They ſhall only feel the effects of the divine Wrath; but never ſee the Beauty of the Holineſs of God, nor be bleſs'd with one ray of his Immenſe Glory: They ſhall experience the Anger of an incens'd God, but never ſee the Face of that God for ever. His wrath ſhall fan the Flames of the Infernal Fire, and his Fury flow in Streams of melted Sulphur. Nor ſhall their Excluſion from the preſence of the Almighty be all their Puniſhment; but their Eternal Abode with the enraged Spirits

Spirits of darkneſs ſhall be a continued Scene of horrour and amazement. They ſhall feel the Laſhes of theſe their inſulting Maſters, whoſe Slaves they had formerly been in the imperious Dictates of a ſinful Life. And if the Apparition of a Spectre, carries with it ſuch frightful Ideas, as to curdle our Blood, and ſink our Spirits within us, what terrour may we imagine we ſhall be in, when we ſhall ſee nothing but Devils waiting round us, and they the Eternal Objects of our Sight? But neither is this all, for theſe our accurs'd Companions ſhall not only ſtand by and ſee, and rejoice at our Torments, but be the cruel Executioners of the Divine Wrath. And if, by the Permiſſion of God, the Devil is able to *add* ſuch Stings to the Afflictions of the Righteous, what muſt not the wicked expect, when they are deliver'd up to his unlimitted Power, to be puniſh'd at his ſole Will and Pleaſure? Nor will their Conſciences within, give them leſs diſturbance; Their guilty Minds ſhall be haunted with the dreadful Catalogue of all thoſe Sins they had ever committed; and they will fall ſo much the heavier upon their Thoughts, in that there is no more Room left them for Repentance; no advantage to be taken of their Saviour's Mercy to a returning Sinner: When once the Provident *Virgins* ſhall enter with the *Bridegroom*, the Door ſhall be Eternally ſhut;

all

all acceſs to the Divine Favour, all motives to relenting Pity, all Springs of Comfort, all Hopes of Pardon, all Means of Grace, all Thoughts of a Converſion, ſhall be for ever barr'd againſt them. They ſhall *ſay to the Mountains and Rocks fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb:* But in vain ſhall they thus invoke their Aſſiſtance; for Heaven and Earth ſhall *flie* his Anger, the terribleneſs of whoſe Wrath, St. *John* deſcribes, when he tells us, *Every Iſland fled away, and the Mountains were not found.* Whatever God in Mercy ſhall beſtow upon his Saints above, to increaſe their Glory, ſhall add a greater weight of Envy to the racking Pains of the *damn'd* below. 'Tis true, there ſhall be Puniſhments proportion'd to the Crimes we have been guilty of, but ſo, that he who feels the lighteſt of them, ſhall have no reaſon to think them tolerable: And he that ſhall groan under the hotteſt Flames, Envying thoſe, who are in a cooler place than himſelf, ſhall burn the more: Nor will it any thing mitigate his ſad Condition, that his deareſt Friends or Relations are received into Eternal Bliſs; no more than it ſhall damp the Happineſs of the other, that theſe are for ever loſt. So intenſe ſhall their Torments be, that their Thoughts ſhall be employ'd upon nothing but their Pain, unleſs it be upon

what

what ſhall encreaſe their Sorrow. They ſhall ſpend their fruitleſs Spite, upon every thing that is the Workmanſhip of their Maker, and even curſe themſelves: They ſhall be ready to burſt with Hatred againſt the Happineſs of his Saints, the purity of Angels, nor ſhall God eſcape their diſdain, not for any thing they can find in the Divine Nature on which to fix their Diſpleaſure, but on the Puniſhment they feel as the effects of his impartial Juſtice. The Miſeries of this Life come ſingly upon us: 'Tis one Man's lot to be pinch'd with Poverty, 'tis another's to be rack'd with the violent pains of a Diſeaſe; this Man ſpends his days in Slavery, and another meets with Reproaches from the taunts of a Malicious World; theſe are tolerable Burthens, if compared to thoſe that are felt below, where Miſeries of every ſort, ſhall at once diſcharge themſelves in Showers upon our Heads. 'Tis ſome mitigation to our troubles here, to hope they will one day be made lighter to us: But there we muſt not think, nor hope for any Abatement of our Sorrows, any freedom from our Chains, no reſpite, no Interruption to our Anguiſh, no not for one Moment. O think what Torments thoſe muſt be! that cou'd we ſuppoſe the whole Race of Mankind from the very beginning of the World, to the laſt day of its Diſſolution, were to bear part of that ſingle Puniſhment

niſhment only, that ſhall be due to the Commiſſion of but one damning Sin, they wou'd every one of them feel greater Torment, than ever was invented by the the moſt Cruel Tyrant, to protract the Sufferings of the moſt flagitious Malefactor. O Lord, do thou teach us ſo to think of this diſmal ſtate, that by thy Grace, and our Obedience, we may never feel the Torments of it. *Amen.*

MEDITATION L.

The Eternity of Hell Torments.

Rev. XX. 10.

They ſhall be Tormented Day and Night, for Ever and Ever.

THink, O my Soul, upon the Eternal duration of thoſe Puniſhments that are reſerv'd for Condemn'd Sinners, and thou wilt make a truer eſtimate of their Greatneſs. Hell is repreſented to us, as an Element of Liquid Flames, and a Fire never to be Extinguiſh'd, ever burning, ever fixt: Where Life ſhall be continu'd through an Eternal Death, and Death be a Life in Eternal Puniſhments. Where the Tormentor ſhall never tire, nor the Tormented ever dye: Where there

there ſhall be a conſuming Fire, and yet ſuch as ſhall keep us for ever living; where our Tortures ſhall increaſe, and yet ſo as ever to be renew'd; ever dying! ever living! ever living! ever dying! to be rack'd with endleſs Pain, and to have no hopes, no proſpect of any abatement of his Sorrows, is a Thought that muſt ſink the Sufferer into the darkeſt Abyſs of a Deep deſpair. What can be more intolerable, than to be always wiſhing for what can never be; and have an averſion for that which will never be in our Power to remove from us? yet this ſhall be the forlorn Condition of the Damn'd, to be always diſappointed in their deſires, and under an inevitable neceſſity of having that for ever forc'd upon them which they moſt abhor. 'Tis then only they can expect an end to all their Miſeries, when they can promiſe themſelves the wrath of God ſhall be no more; but as *his Wrath will burn for ever*, ſo long will it protract their Puniſhment. When e'er they can produce the effects of a true Repentance, they may then hope to be releas'd from the penalty of their Sins; but alaſs! 'twill be then too late to Repent, all hopes of Pardon, all equity of a Redemption will be then forclos'd. When Devils ſhall grow weary of Puniſhing, change their Natures, and learn to relent at the Sufferings they inflict, then may the Sinner expect ſome abatement of his Troubles,

ſome

ſome Ceſſation of his Sorrows: But as the fury of Hell ſhall laſt for ever, and rage be an inſeparable quality of theſe Infernal Spirits, there can be no proſpect of ever ſeeing a happy Period of theſe exceſſive Miſeries. When God ſhall forget to be *Juſt*, when he ſhall diſrobe himſelf of that eſſential Attribute of his Nature, then may there be no ſuch thing as Puniſhment below; but as he is a God unchangable in his Eſſence, ſinners ſhall be as Eternally Puniſh'd, as God ſhall continue to remain a *Juſt God*. 'Tis an Argument of the impartiality of a Righteous Judge, not to paſs by unpuniſh'd, thoſe who had all their lives been *Treaſuring up to themſelves the Wrath of God*, and wou'd by no means relinquiſh thoſe Sins, upon which ſo ſevere a Judgment was entail'd. 'Twill be thought *Juſt*, that a ſtrict Revenge ſhou'd be for ever taken upon him, who had extended his guilt to as great a length as his ſinful Life wou'd ſuffer him. The Damn'd had ſinned out their Eternity, that is, to the laſt Moment of their Lives here; 'twill now be reaſonable, the long forbearing Juſtice of God, ſhou'd take its turn, and Puniſh them in that Eternal State, which he had aſſign'd to their Impenitence. Their Sins indeed were temporal, becauſe their Lives were ſo; whereas cou'd they have been ſuffer'd to Live for ever here, that they might have Sinn'd for ever, they wou'd have ſpar'd none

of

of that Eternity for a Hearty Repentance, nor put an end to thoſe Sins in which they had ſuch a Scope of pleaſing themſelves. While Sin is the Eternal Fewel that feeds theſe Flames, there is very great reaſon the Puniſhment ſhou'd be of the ſame Continuance. That will be ever odious in the ſight of God, be ever diſpleaſing to his Eyes; how then can the Greatneſs of the Puniſhment ordain'd for Sins, be ever taken away? Beſides what makes our Sins of an Infinite malignity, is, that they are committed againſt the Infinite Goodneſs of God, and required an Infinite price, the Death of Chriſt, to attone for 'em; 'tis therefore conſiſtant with the Juſtice of Heaven, to Puniſh the unrepenting Sinner, who dies in Sin, with a Puniſhment proportionable to that, for which he is to ſuffer. Man has obſtinately brought all this upon himſelf, fruſtrated the Gracious deſigns and goodneſs of God for his Salvation, and muſt thank himſelf if he falls; for the Juſtice of his Judge will be acquitted when ſuch a Sinner is condemn'd. God at firſt made *him after his own Image*, deſign'd him for a happineſs with himſelf, reinſtated him into his Favour after he had fall'n from him by his Sins, and recover'd him to his own likeneſs by the Merits of a Redeemer; provided means of Eternal Salvation to the whole World, freely offer'd to the Sons of Men the rewards

of

of an Eternal Happineſs and after all that he has thus in Mercy, Infinite Mercy, done for them, is it not Juſt, that they who cou'd deſpiſe an Eternity of Bliſs, ſhou'd be made ſubject to an Eternity of Sorrow? They choſe the momentary pleaſures of Sin, a finite Happineſs here, before the Infinite enjoyment of an Infinitely Happy God; their Souls were ſet upon the delights of a fleeting tranſient World, and no regard had to the Riches of an Eternal Life hereafter; 'tis Juſt in God then to exclude them for ever from a place they ſo much deſpis'd, O boundleſs Eternity! O unmeaſurable Duration! O unconceivable Tract! how muſt the Thoughts of thee Augment the Torments of the Damn'd? When a numberleſs Thouſands of years ſhall have paſs'd over their Heads, they ſhall have this Thought preſs'd upon their Souls, That their Sorrows are but ſtill begun. How uneaſy is it, tho' on a Bed of Down, to be confin'd for Years, in one conſtant Poſture; what ſhall it be then to lie for ever upon an Eternal Bed of Flames? O Eternity! Eternity! 'tis thou, that beyond all our Thoughts can bear, do'ſt heighten the Torments of Damnation! They are intolerable upon the account of that bitter pain they ſhall create, more ſo, for the number of them; but who can expreſs the weight that Eternity ſhall give them? Where there ſhall be Death, without dying, Time

running in an endleſs Circle, be ever ſpent, yet never waſte. The deſires of theſe unhappy Wretches ſhall be always after Life, but never find it; their wiſhes be for Death, but all in vain, for that will for ever fly before them. When Ten Thouſand Centuries, and as many Myriads of Years ſhall be gone and paſt, they ſhall return again with a freſh revival of their Torments. Their preſent ſenſe of Pain ſhall leſs affect their Thoughts, than the ſingle conſideration that they are to laſt for ever. What greater Miſery can there be, than to die ſo, as to be always living, and to live as to be always dying? This is a Life of Death, and a Death that is immortal. If Life, how canſt thou Dye? If Death, how canſt thou ſurvive it? We know not perfectly what Eternity is; for indeed, that which is not circumſcrib'd by any meaſure we can make of Time, can be conceiv'd by no human Conception we can have of it; but if thou woud'ſt have any Idea of it, thy Thoughts muſt take their riſe from that boundleſs tract of Time that was before the Foundation of the World: If thou canſt trace the Being of God to his firſt Original, then may'ſt thou diſcover when Hell and the Torments of it ſhall be no more. Build in thy own Thoughts a vaſt and ſtupendious Mountain, as large as can ſtand between the Confines of Heaven and Earth, and ſuppoſe a Bird to take from this Airy Fabrick,

Fabrick, but one ſingle Sand or Duſt, at the end of every Thouſand years, thou might'ſt indeed hope to ſee it demoliſh'd after an unconceivable Revolution; but never hope to live out an Eternityof that Fire that ſhall never be Extinguiſh'd. The Rewards of the Bleſſed, and the Puniſhments of the Damn'd, are equally Eternal as to their continuance; the Love and Mercy of God ſhall for ever purſue the one, while his Equity and Juſtice ſhall be demanding Satisfaction from the other. O Devout Soul, let the Eternity of Hell Torments be often in thy Thoughts! to call the Terrours of it to thy Mind may be the happy means of preventing thy fall into ſo diſmal a Place. Let Repentance be the great buſineſs of thy Life, now while the Arms and Love of God are open to receive thee. There is nothing elſe will feed the Flames of Hell but thy Sins: While therefore thou art heaping up theſe upon thy guilty Soul, thou doſt but throw on more fewel upon this Infernal Fire, and fan thy own Flames. O Lord Jeſu! who by thy Death and Paſſion haſt made a full and perfect ſatisfaction to thy Father, for our Sins, keep us by thy Grace and Mercy from Eternal Damnation.

The Prayer.

O Thou Juſt and Holy God, whither ſhall I fly from the Terrors of thy wrath? Where ſhall I hide my ſelf from the ſight of my Tormentor? My Sins are ever before my Eyes, and the Puniſhment of them preſent to my Thoughts. My Soul is amaz'd at its own guilt, and my Conſcience has already began my Torments within me. Hell opens its Mouth to receive me, and my Sins are hurrying me into the Jaws of Death. Lord, How can I endure? How can I think of that Fire which is never to be quench'd? Or be able to bear the gnawings of that Worm that ſhall never dye? If the Exquiſiteneſs and Eternity of theſe Torments will not deter us from offending thee, nor from drawing down theſe Infinite Miſeries upon our Heads, how, beyond all retrieve, muſt we be ſet upon our own Ruin? But, O Lord, the Infinity of theſe Torments, make me fly to the Infinity of thy Mercy; there Fire can't burn with ſo much Ardour to Torment me, as thy Love does with a Merciful Deſire to Save me. I will therefore hide my ſelf under thy Wings, and be ſafe under thy Feathers. My Fears ſhall not affright me from my Duty, nor the greatneſs of this Puniſhment leſſen my Obedience; the Tor-

Torments are unſpeakable, but thy Mercy will be exalted the more, O Lord, upon this account when I ſhall have eſcap'd them. And, O Holy and moſt Merciful Jeſu, who haſt reveal'd to us in thy Goſpel the Terrors of Hell, and the Eternity of them, but at the ſame time haſt taught us the Bleſſed means to eſcape them, do thou ſupport me with thy Spirit, apply thy Merits to my Soul, and drive away all deſponding Thoughts of my Eternal Condition, whilſt thou art my only Saviour, my only Hope, the Rock of my Salvation, and my moſt Merciful God. *Amen*, Lord Jeſu, *Amen*.

MEDITATION LI.

Of our Spiritual Reſurrection.

Rom. VI. 4.

Like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father: Even ſo we alſo ſhou'd walk in newneſs of Life.

THE Reſurrection of Chriſt will avail thee nothing, unleſs thou Imitate and tranſcribe in thy Heart the Graces and Vertues of thy Saviour, and by a newneſs of Life, which

which is thy first Resurrection, draw a lively resemblance and pourtraiture of his. 'Tis in our Spiritual Resurrection, as with that of every thing else, especially with that of our Bodies at the last Day, they must dye, and fall before they can properly be said to rise again from their Graves, the Corruptions of our Natures, the Obstinacy of our Wills, the Sinfulness of our Affections, must all first make way for the Reception of Christ and his Divine Graces to rise in our Hearts. The renewing Vertue of the Spirit will not exert it self, unless the inveterate Corruptions of the Flesh, our deprav'd Appetites, and our sinful Desires, first withdraw for its Reception. Nor are the transient gleams of Grace, sufficient for thee to determine this newness of Life, because a thorough renewal of thy Natural State, is not the work of a single Hour; thy Corruptions will be daily making head against thee, gathering strength for fresh assaults upon thy Soul; thou must therefore as daily be upon thy guard, gain ground over them by degrees, that the Blessed Spirit may take Possession and rise within thee, as these retire and give way. Our Saviour took his way through the Grave before he Ascended to his Father, and made his glorious entry into Heaven; which must be thy case here, thou must be *Dead unto Sin*,

and

and make thy way through the Conqueſts over thy own Corruption. He is no Member of the Myſtical Body of Chriſt, who is not actuated with his Spirit; nor ſhall he be admitted to the Participation of the Glories of the Church Triumphant, who is not enroll'd nor bears a part in the Services of the Church Militant below. That Soul which has not by Faith in this Life enter'd into the neareſt Union with its Saviour, nor obtain'd the earneſt of the Bleſſed Spirit as a Seal of that mutual Love between Chriſt and her, ſhall be excluded from the Marriage of the Lamb, and be diſown'd for a Gueſt at thoſe Happy Solemnities. Let Chriſt therefore live in thee by thy moſt ready compliance with the influences of his Spirit, and let him riſe in thy Heart in all the Virtues of a Holy Life, that thou may'ſt hereafter live with him for ever: *Bleſſed and Holy is he that hath part in this firſt Reſurrection, on ſuch the ſecond Death hath no power.* This is the way to ſecure to our ſelves a bleſſed Immortality, when our Bodies ſhall riſe out of their Graves at the laſt Day. There will Spring forth a light in thy Soul, as bright as that which attended upon thy Saviour on the Morning of his Reſurrection, a ſaving knowledge of God

will

will illuminate thy understanding, and lead thee in the way thou art to go: But what Rays of this Saving and Divine Knowledge can break through the thick Darkness with which Sin overspreads the Faculties of our Souls? *The fear of the Lord, is the first great principal of Wisdom*; But what room can there be to be thus Wise, where Irreligion and Profaness, a Contempt of God, and an Irreverence for every thing that is Sacred, has defac'd the very sense, and awfulness of the Divine Majesty? He who lives here in a dark and wilful Ignorance of God, and shuts his Eyes against the plain and reveal'd light of the Divine Will and his own Duty, How shall this Man be ever capable of bearing, or being made partaker of that Eternal Light which shall flow from the Immense Fountain of the Divine Presence? As for those who had been obedient here to the light that was afforded them; they only pass from an imperfect State of Knowledge, to those more perfect and ever-improving Illuminations of the Blest: Whereas the Sons of Darkness, from a spiritual blindness of their own procuring, shall fall into an unexpressible Darkness, where Light shall be ever excluded from their Eyes. Our Saviour by his Resurrection

from

from the Grave, triumph'd over the confines of Darkneſs, and gain'd a glorious Victory over the power of Death; 'tis thus from the *Death of Sin* we riſe triumphant over the Grave, *Death has no more power over us*; but opens us a paſſage to Immortality. *Chriſt died for our ſins, and roſe again for our Juſtification*, and when he riſes in our Hearts, and the operations of his Spirit has enabled us to get the Maſtery of our Sins, his Righteouſneſs ſupplying the defect of ours ſhall juſtify us in the ſight of God; And then what reaſon ſhall we have to fear the imputation of our Sins, when ſo perfect a Righteouſneſs as that of our Redeemer pleads its own Merit in our behalf? 'Tis by a true Faith we apply the ſpotleſs Holineſs of Chriſt, to the Juſtification of our Souls from the Puniſhment of our ſins; for he has made full ſatisfaction for them, and by believing in him we may obtain Remiſſion of them, and the Juſtification of our Perſons.

In many Particulars this Change, or new Birth, that is wrought in us by the Spirit of God; bears a reſemblance to the Reſurrection of Chriſt. 'Twas by this, he brought us back a compleat Victory over the Devil himſelf, and by his deſcent into the Territories

ries of our Great and powerful Adverſary, has deſtroy'd his Kingdom, laid waſte his Capital, and given us a power to withſtand and eſcape the fiery Darts of the *Wicked one*. This Conqueſt is again renew'd in our hearts, and while Chriſt is with us, and we are fortified by the tutelary Preſence of his Spirit, the Devil Attempts upon our Souls have no Succeſs; Nor can he ſo much as hope to gain a Victory over us, while this his invincible Conquerour is in alliance with, and fights our Battels for us. Again, the Earthquake felt at our Saviour's Reſurrection, as if the Grave were loth to part with ſo great a Depoſitory, may put us in mind that we are not to expect ſuch a change, as that of our Spiritual Birth, without ſome inward Struggles of our corrupt Natures, ſome compunction in our Minds, and a thorough Contrition of our Hearts: There will be ſome uneaſy hankerings of our Fleſh after its former Pleaſures, and theſe not to be wholly ſubdued without a brisk and reſolute Reſiſtance. And where we have ſo great and difficult a Work to do, as to give a full diſcharge to our Sins, which can't be done but after a thorough Repentance for them, and a true Senſe of having provok'd the Wrath and Juſtice of God: We muſt expect, nay, tis an Argument of this our Spiritual Reſurrection, that we feel ſome regret,

and

and a Godly ſorrow for our Sins riſing in our hearts. The Prophet *Ezekiel* expreſſes this Concluſion of his Soul, by God's having broken to pieces all his Bones; but draws this comfortable Concluſion from the inward Commotions of his heart, thus, O Lord, ſhall they live, and in ſuch contrite Souls ſhall thy Spirit dwell: Thou wilt correct me, but tis in order to raiſe me up to a Life that is Spiritual, and in Mercy haſt caſt my Sins behind thee. Again, the Angel that deſcended at our Saviour's Reſurrection and ſat upon his Sepulchre, may be a comfortable Intimation to us, of that Protection thoſe Bleſſed Spirits ſhall have over us at our new Birth. Our unregenrate State made the Devil ever buſie about us, and our hearts prepar'd for the reception of him: But in this our happy Converſion by the Spirit of God, 'tis a Pleaſure to the Angels to be ever with us. We have an Aſſurance given us of this, in that *there is Joy in Heaven among theſe holy Spirits over one Sinner that repenteth.* O Bleſſed Repentance! that haſt ſuch a Chain of Bleſſings going along with thee, as the Renewal of our corrupt Natures by the Reſurrection of Chriſt within us, the Grace and Favour of God towards us, and the Care and Guardianſhip of Angels about us. And on the other ſide, O the unhappy State of an unregenerate Soul!

Where

Where Nature, unaſſiſted Nature, reigns in its full Power, and we pay a ſlaviſh Obedience to our Luſts, and become Subjects to the Great Tyrant; and when this is our caſe, what Fellowſhip can there be between Holy Angels and an accurs'd Devil?

Again, Our Saviour after he was riſen from the Grave, appear'd to his Diſciples, and convinc'd them that he was alive: The like Conviction then, that he gave to their outward Senſes, of the reality of his Reſurrection; do thou by thy Love and Charity, and all the Fruits of the Bleſſed Spirit, give, that thou art a living Member of Chriſt, and let a Life of Holineſs and Piety ſhow the inward Power of the Divine Grace upon thy Soul. 'Tis our Activity and Motion only that proves us to be alive. And if Chriſt be with us, his Spirit will be with us too, and move *our hearts to every good Work, and make us the Sons of God. If therefore we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.* Charity to Faith, is like Rays to the Sun, their Light and Warmth are equally inſeparable. Our Sins are thoſe *dead Works* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, and if thou walk'ſt in them, how canſt thou be ſaid to live in Chriſt, or Chriſt in thee, or be actuated by the ſame Spirit that was in him? how can he be riſen upon thy Soul, when thy Sins have

have the ſole Dominion over thee, and thy Original Guilt, and the Corruptions of thy firſt Nature are ſtill in their full Force and Vigour?

O Bleſſed Jeſu! Do thou raiſe us from the Death of Sin to a Life of Righteouſneſs. May thy Death extinguiſh all the Corruptions of our Fleſh. May thy Reſurrection recover our Souls to a newneſs of Life. May thy Blood cleanſe us from our Sins. May we be Juſtified by thy Righteouſneſs, and have the Seal of thy Spirit to aſſure us of it. O thou, that art the true Life, to thee alone, do we who are dead in our Sins and Treſpaſſes, look up for the Aſſiſtance of thy Sight. To thee do we look up, O thou who art Righteouſneſs it ſelf, to remove from us that diſtance which our Sins have caus'd between thee and our Souls. 'Tis to thee, O thou only Saviour of the World, we fly with ardent Prayers for our Salvation. O Enliven us by thy Grace! Juſtifie us by thy Spirit! And ſave, Eternally ſave us by all the Merits of thy Death and Paſſion. *Amen.*

The Prayer.

ALmighty and Everlaſting God, who hateſt nothing that thou haſt made, and doſt forgive the Sins of all them that are

Penitent; create and make in me a new and contrite Heart, that I worthily lamenting my Sins, and acknowledging my Wretchedneſs, may obtain of thee, the God of all Mercy, perfect Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

THE TABLE.

23. The

The TABLE.

FINIS.